NATION

India attains 'major power' status on Asia Index 2025

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IMF grades India's GDP, other national data 'C'

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Jharkhand elbow out K'taka, Mhatre slams 110 for Mumbai

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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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Aadhaar no longer proof of birth in UP & Maharashtra

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

The Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra governments said that Aadhaar cards would no longer be used as proof of birth. The Uttar Pradesh government has asked the departments to refer to the letter by Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) dated 31 October, 2025, which had clarified that "Aadhaar card is not the proof of birth, while a Thursday circular by the Maharashtra Revenue and Forest Department said that Aadhaar cannot be accepted as standalone proof of date or place of birth, in line with Central Government guidelines.

"You are requested to direct all concerned that they should not accept Aadhaar Card as the proof of birth," read the order issued by Amit Singh Singhal, special Secretary Planning, to all the additional chief secretaries, principal secretaries and secretaries across Uttar Pradesh. No birth certificate is attached to the Aadhaar card; therefore, it cannot be considered a birth certificate, the order said.

Similarly, in Maharashtra, the government said that certificates issued solely based on Aadhaar are to be treated as defective and cancelled immediately, and corresponding entries on the Civil Registration System (CRS) portal must be deleted.

Uttar Pradesh officials said that birth certificates, high-school marksheets and other documents can be used as proof of birth. *—Agencies*

Cyclone Ditwah: Rain alert in K'taka, Tamil Nadu

BENGALURU, 28 NOV

Cyclone Ditwah intensifies over the southwest Bay of Bengal and tracks north-northwest across the Sri Lanka coast, with Karnataka bracing for heavy rainfall.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued alerts for South Interior Karnataka, forecasting heavy rain on 29 November and thunderstorms with lightning on 29 and 30 November as the system moves towards the north Tamil Nadu–Puducherry–south Andhra Pradesh coasts by early 30 November. The storm lay about 320km south-southeast of Karaikal and 530km south of Chennai at the time of publishing. IMD has forecast heavy to very heavy rain in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Kerala through 30 November. *—Agencies*

Speaker UTK's new chair in Belagavi costs Rs 42 lakh

BELAGAVI, 28 NOV

Information activist Bhimappa Gadad has alleged, Rs 42.93 lakh was spent to furnish a new Speaker's table and chair set at the Suvarna Vidhana Soudha (SVS) in Belagavi, at the direction of Speaker UT Khader. An additional Rs 1.98 lakh spent for refurbishing the Legislative Council chair, according to the RTI. This was higher than the Rs 36.60 lakh which was spent on furniture for the President's visit in 2012, Gadad alleged. Separately, in February 2023, a total of Rs 81.01 lakh was spent to commission and install oil portraits of great leaders.

—Salar News

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India's Q2 GDP is at massive 8.2%, claims govt

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

India's economy grew 8.2 per cent in the second quarter of FY2025-26, a six-quarter high driven by strong manufacturing and services output, according to data released by the National Statistics Office (NSO).

The expansion, up from 7.8 per cent in Q1 and 5.6 per cent a year earlier, helped India retain its position as the world's fastest-growing major economy. China grew 4.8 per cent during the same period.

Manufacturing rose 9.1 per cent, sharply higher than 2.2 per cent last year, as factories ramped up production ahead of festive demand following the September GST rate cut. Services, including banking and real estate, posted robust 10.2 per cent growth compared to 7.2 per cent a year earlier. Agriculture, however, slowed to 3.5 per cent from 4.1 per cent. Real GDP in Q2 stood at Rs 48.63 lakh crore, while nominal GDP rose 8.7 per cent to Rs 85.25 lakh crore. For the first half of the fiscal, real GDP grew 8 per cent, up from 6.1 per cent last year, raising the likelihood of exceeding the FY26 growth target of 6.3–6.8 per cent.

Icra Chief Economist Aditi Nayar said the higher-than-expected print "surpassed forecasts", though she cautioned that weak government spending, a low GDP deflator and potential external shocks may temper momentum. Deloitte's Rumki Majumdar said festive spending and GST 2.0 reforms could lift Q3 activity but warned that slower nominal growth may complicate fiscal deficit management. *—PTI*

Not in a hurry; party will decide: DKS on CM tussle

Shares stage with CM, says they're planning all party meet

In a show of unity, CM Siddaramaiah and DyCM DK Shivakumar shared the stage during the Golden Jubilee celebration of the Integrated Child Development Project in City on Friday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

In the midst of an alleged power tussle with Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, his deputy DK Shivakumar on Friday said he "does not want anything and is not in a hurry."

The KPCC President said that he would go to New Delhi to meet the party High Command if called, saying "Delhi is our temple…. Without Delhi, nothing can happen."

"I don't want anything. I am not in a hurry. My party will take a decision," he told press on the sidelines of a function marking the golden jubilee of the Anganwadi programme.

Notably, both Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar shared the stage during the event.

He said he may travel to the national capital for the Parliament's Winter Session starting 1 December. He added that his visit to Delhi would be to secure the welfare for farmers.

"I have a lot of work there. The parliament session is approaching. I have to meet all Karnataka MPs because they need to take up some of our projects," he said.

Shivakumar noted that the Supreme Court had given justice to Karnataka in the Mekedatu balancing reservoir issue, and he plans to discuss the matter with the state's MPs.

Political circles are abuzz with reports that the Congress High Command has summoned the CM and his Deputy to resolve the leadership tussle that has gained steam in the wake of the party government completing its half way mark recently.

He added that both he and Siddaramaiah are convening an all-party meeting to discuss a wide range of issues, including Mekedatu and the maize price crash.

Shivakumar also sought to distance himself from caste politics, saying he belongs to the Congress community.

Shivakumar's comments come amid a heightened war of words between him and Siddaramaiah. *—PTI*

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SIR killed 40 in West Bengal: TMC

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

A Trinamool Congress delegation met the full bench of the Election Commission of India here on Friday and said that around 40 SIR-related deaths had occurred in West Bengal so far, and accused the ECI chief of having "blood on his hands."

The 10-member delegation, led by Rajya Sabha leader Derek O'Brien, met the EC officials amid the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in West Bengal.

The delegation consisted of Lok Sabha MPs Mahua Moitra, Satabdi Roy, Kalyan Banerjee, Pratima Mondal, Sajda Ahmed, and Rajya Sabha MPs Dola Sen, Mamata Thakur, Saket Gokhale, and Prakash Chik Barik.

After their meeting, O'Brien said that the TMC had raised five questions, but Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar did not respond to them. Moitra said the delegation gave the CEC a list of 40 people. The commission dismissed it as mere allegations and asked the TMC to stop its threats. *—PTI*

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Girl dies by suicide over her AI nudes

KOLKATA, 28 NOV

A Class 10 student was found hanging from the ceiling of her room in Sonarpur in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district after her AI-generated nude images were circulated on social media, police said on Friday. The girl, who had been staying at her maternal uncle's house, was immediately taken to a nearby hospital, where doctors declared her brought dead, a police officer said. "We have received a complaint that a married man had been harassing her."

Her family alleged that he had collected her photographs and used AI tools to create nude images. *—PTI*

Help is available. Please call Tele Manas at 14416, SAHAI at 080-25497777 for support.

Trump stops migration from '3rd world countries'

NEW YORK/ WASHINGTON, 28 NOV

US President Donald Trump on Friday said he will "permanently pause" migration from all "third world" countries and deport foreign nationals who are a "security risk" as his administration intensified crackdown on immigration after two National Guard members were shot at by Afghan national. One of the Guards succumbed to her injuries on Thursday.

The Trump administration said it will conduct a "rigorous" re-examination of all Green Cards issued to immigrants from "every country of concern".

"Even as we have progressed technologically, Immigration Policy has eroded those gains and living conditions for many. I will permanently pause migration from all Third World Countries to allow the US system to fully recover, terminate all of the millions of Biden illegal admissions, including those signed by Sleepy Joe Biden's Autopen, and remove anyone who is not a net asset to the United States, or is incapable of loving our Country," Trump on his Truth Social.

He said he would end all federal benefits and subsidies to noncitizens in the country, "denaturalise migrants who undermine domestic tranquility, and deport any Foreign National who is a public charge, security risk, or non-compatible with Western Civilization". *—PTI*

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PM hails Udupi-BJP connect, 'Sudarshan Chakra' security

UDUPI, 28 NOV

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said Udupi was the "karmabhoomi" of the BJP and its predecessor the Jana Sangh. He also slammed the "no retaliation" after terror attacks by previous governments and hailed Operation Sudrashan Chakra as providing "a wall of security" for the country.

Modi held a road show in Udupi and recited shlokas from the Bhagwat Gita along with 1 lakh devotees at the Laksha Kantha Gita Parayana event at Sri Krishna Mutt.

"Coming to Udupi is very special for me. Udupi has been the karmabhoomi of the Jana Sangh and the Bharatiya Janta Party's model of good governancem" Modi said. "In 1968, the people of Udupi elected (former Karnataka MLA) VS Acharya of the Jana Sangh to the Udupi Municipal Corporation. With this, Udupi laid the foundation of a new governance model. The cleanliness drive we are witnessing today was adopted by Udupi five decades ago."

> **Mission Sudarshan Chakra means to build a wall of security around prime locations. If the enemy dared to attack, our Sudarshan Chakra would destroy them**
>
> -Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

He added that Gujarat, where he is from, and Udupi have had a deep relationship because of Krishna. *—ANI*

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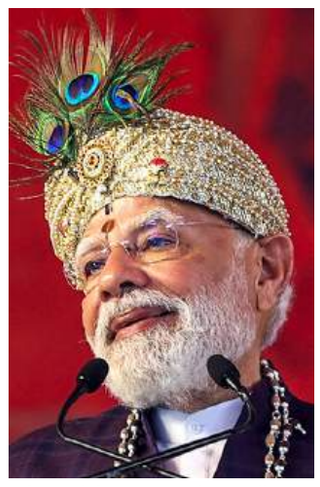

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses a gathering during 'Laksha Kantha Gita Parayana' programme at Sri Krishna Mutt, in Udupi, Karnataka **PHOTO: PTI**

Putin to visit India on 4-5 Dec

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

Russian President Vladimir Putin is set to visit India from 4 to 5 December for the 23rd annual summit with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The visit aims to strengthen the 'Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership' between India and Russia, with significant outcomes expected, particularly in defence and energy cooperation. The MEA announced that both leaders will review bilateral relations and discuss a joint statement along with various interdepartmental and business agreements. Key topics on the agenda include enhancing defence ties, including potential discussions on procuring additional S-400 surface-to-air missile systems and Su-57 fighter jets. The S-400 systems have been effective during recent operations, and procurement plans are being considered. *—PTI*

EARTHQUAKE ALARM

New seismic map places entire Himalayan region in high risk zone

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

India has released an updated seismic zonation map under the 2025 Earthquake Design Code, placing the entire Himalayan arc in a new Zone VI, the highest-risk category.

The overhaul issued by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) marks one of the biggest revisions of national earthquake exposure in decades, with 61 per cent of the country now classified as moderate to high hazard.

Experts say the update brings long-needed uniformity to the Himalayan belt, earlier split between Zones IV and V despite shared tectonic stress. Vineet Gahalaut, director of the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology and former head of the National

Centre for Seismology, said older maps underestimated long-unruptured faults and overlooked the chance of ruptures extending southwards to the Himalayan Frontal Thrust.

The code removes abrupt hazard shifts once aligned with administrative boundaries and includes a rule placing towns on zone borders automatically in the higher category. BIS said the map is based on probabilistic seismic hazard assessment using data on active faults, maximum magnitudes, seismic-wave attenuation and regional tectonics, replacing earlier reliance on historical epicentres and broad geological groupings.

The revision introduces stricter safety norms for structural and non-structural elements. Heavy components exceeding 1 per cent of a building's weight must be anchored, and projects near active faults must account for strong pulse-like ground motions. Critical infrastructure must remain functional after major quakes. The southern peninsula also saw only minor changes owing to its stable tectonic setting. *—Agencies*

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PHOTO: SALAR

Tigress captured near Hunsur, now search on for 4 cubs

MYSURU, 28 NOV

The Hunsur forest authorities captured a 10 to 12-year-old tigress on Thursday midnight when it arrived to see her four cubs in a maize field in Gowdanakatte village in Hunsur taluk. Forest officials launched the operation two days ago after reports of a tigress and her four cubs being seen in the villages of Varanchi, Hosavaranchi, Kalenahalli, and Gowdanakatte in Hunsur taluk. Villagers panicked after it attempted to attack two farmers. However, the capture attempt involving forest officials, veterinarians, drones, and tamed elephants was successful. The animal was safely sedated and moved to the Koorgalli Rehabilitation Centre near Mysuru. Forest officials continued their search to find the four cubs of the tigress, which are believed to be hiding in agricultural fields. *—Salar News*

Anekal NGO creates child marriage awareness in Kolar

KOLAR, 28 NOV

The Anekal-based NGO READ Centre organised a mass pledging event at Government High School in Shivarapatna and Doddashivara in Kolar District of the State, drawing 545 participants, including twenty teachers, as part of the 100-day campaign against child marriage. Director Sam Chelladurai expressed hope, stating, "These 100 days of intensive action have the power to change the course of this country... we are confident that we will make our district child marriage free within a year." Collaborating with Just Rights for Children, READ Centre has already prevented nearly 400 child marriages over the past year. The campaign, aligned with the Government of India's 100-Day Intensive Action Plan, focuses on raising awareness across schools. The campaign will conclude on 8 March 2026, coinciding with International Women's Day. *—PTI*

CM calls DKS for breakfast amid fight

CM says High Command asked for the meeting; Bommai says 'dark horse' may enter race

BENGALURU, 28 NOV

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday said he invited his deputy DK Shivakumar for a meeting over breakfast on 29 November to discuss the heightened leadership row. Speaking to press in the City, Siddaramaiah said, "The party High Command had called me and him and asked us to have a meeting. Hence, I have invited him for breakfast tomorrow. We will discuss when he comes," Siddaramaiah said.

"There is no change in my stand and I have said I will listen to whatever the High Command says. Both of us have said that we will obey whatever the party High Command says," he added. Earlier, Shivakumar met with several Congress MLA's "Today, KY Nanjegowda, the MLA from Malluru, Kotturu Manjunath, the MLA from Kolar, Adi Narayana, the Congress leader from Mulbagal, Dr Ranganath, the MLA from Kunigal, and Prof MV Rajeev Gowda visited me and held discussions," he said on X.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and DyCM DK Shivakumar during the Golden Jubilee celebration of the Integrated Child Development Project at the Palace Grounds in Bengaluru on Friday ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

Later, addressing questions about Vokkaliga seers being upset with recent political developments, Shivakumar said, "I don't want any community angle. My community is the Congress community. Of course, I may belong to one community, and they (Vokkaligas) may like me. That is different... My love is for all sections of society—backward classes, scheduled castes, minorities, and everyone. Even Vokkaligas are backward class people." Meanwhile, former chief minister and BJP leader Basavaraj Bommai said that the Opposition part may consider moving a no-confidence motion.

The Haveri BJP MP leader also predicted that a "dark horse" may enter the race. "There is information that a new formula is being prepared by keeping both of them aside. There is a possibility of a dark horse entering the race," Bommai told reporters here in Haveri.

"A horse that is not visible now may appear. The horse that is seen in the photograph will not run. Anything can happen in the State." Other leaders in the fray for the CM's position are PwD Minister Satish Jarkiholi and Home Minister G Parameshwara. —Agencies

Take truth test before Goddess: BJP MLC to CM

MYSURU, 28 NOV

Former minister and BJP MLC AH Vishwanath on Friday challenged CM Siddaramaiah to swear before Goddess Chamundeshwari that no power-sharing deal was discussed with the Congress High Command, saying it would end the tussle between him and Dy CM DK Shivakumar. Speaking in Mysuru, he warned the dispute was taking a caste turn, with Vokkaliga seers backing Shivakumar and Kuruba pontiffs supporting CM, calling it "more dangerous than political clashes." *—Salar News*

Won't be surprised if Cong splits: Vijayendra

BENGALURU, 28 NOV

BJP president BY Vijayendra on Friday said he "wouldn't be surprised" if the Karnataka Congress splits into two factions. He said the BJP has no role in the ruling party's "internal bickering" but claimed governance is suffering. Urging Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy CM DK Shivakumar to resolve their differences before the 8 December Winter Session, he noted farmers are awaiting compensation and warned Shivakumar is "posing aggressively." *—ANI*

Moneylenders barge into home, assault family in Haveri

HAVERI, 28 NOV

A group of six men forcibly entered a house and brutally attacked a family over a loan repayment dispute in Hanagal taluk of Haveri district. They allegedly attempted to murder the victim, Jainulasab Babusab Tumbaragi, 62, under the pretext of collecting interest on a loan, attempting to kill him.

The Hanagal police have so far arrested three people based on a complaint by Jainulasab.

The group allegedly assaulted Jainulasab and pushed around and assaulted family members and issued death threats. Accused Yogesh Sunagar reportedly attempted to hit Jainulasab with a wooden club. When his relative Gausamoddin Rajkhan intervened, the blow struck his left arm, leaving him seriously injured. He is now undergoing treatment.

"Yogesh attacked my son, Gousamodin Bakshusa, 25, who sustained injuries to his hand. We rushed to the hospital and he is currently receiving treatment," Jainulasab told Salar News. "We have to give the attackers an outstanding loan amount of Rs 21,000. We have already paid a significant portion of the loan with interest."

Police said the complainant's son had been paying interest regularly, yet the accused continued to demand more. The group allegedly created a ruckus during dinner time and terrorised the family. Neighbours intervened and prevented further violence.

"(The accused) were involved in moneylending in the village," Sub-inspector Sampath told Salar News. "They used to lend money to vegetable vendors, street-side traders, and others for daily needs at high interest rates. If interest was not paid, they harassed the borrowers."

The arrested are Yogesh Sunagar, 27; Manoj Sunagar, 28; and Devaraj Taravanda, 26, all residents of Bommanahalli. They have been remanded into the judicial custody, and search is on for the remaining accused. *—Salar News*

Modi pays tribute to Saint Kanakadasa

UDUPI, 28 NOV

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday visited the historic Kanaka Mantap in Udupi and offered floral tributes to Kirthanakar Kanakadasa, the revered 14th-15th century AD saint-philosopher.

Kanakadasa is credited with the legendary episode of Lord Krishna's idol turning westward at the Udupi Sri Krishna Temple.

Later, the Prime Minister participated in the "Laksha Geeta Pathana", a mass recitation in which more than one lakh devotees chanted verses from the Bhagavad Gita.

Accompanied by Paryaya Puthige Math seer, Sugunendra Thirtha, Karnataka Governor Thawarchand Gehlot and others, the PM joined the mass recital and read out the hymns.

PM Narendra Modi during a roadshow, in Udupi, Karnataka ***PHOTO: PTI***

Earlier, after paying homage at the Mantap, Modi proceeded to the Sri Krishna Temple complex, where he was received with traditional honours by Sugunendra Thirtha, along with the Diwan of the Math and senior temple officials.

Modi spent time inside the sanctum precincts, acknowledging the significance of Kanakadasa's devotion and the enduring cultural legacy associated with the temple.

Modi was given a Poorna Kumbh swagatham (welcome with traditional honours) as he entered the Krishna Math precincts. He was presented with a silver clad Tulasi Japa maala and Mudras containing Shankha, Chakra, Gada, and Padma, which the Madhwas and most of the Brahmin communities use for their daily Pooja rituals in South India.

This is the second visit of PM Modi to the Krishna temple. He had visited in 2008 when he was the Chief Minister of Gujarat. Even then, the same Swamiji was the administrative head of the Krishna Mutt. *—PTI*

Siddaramaiah lauds ICDS as visionary scheme

BENGALURU, 28 NOV

State Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday described the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) as a "visionary initiative" aimed at combating maternal and child mortality and malnutrition.

He said the scheme currently benefits over 40 lakh women and children through 69,922 anganwadi centres statewide.

At an event marking the golden jubilee of the Comprehensive Child Development Scheme, organised by the Department of Women and Child Development, he recalled that ICDS was launched in the 1970s, when maternal and child mortality rates were high, and that Karnataka's first anganwadi opened in Hosahalli, T Narasipura taluk, initially covering 33 taluks.

Siddaramaiah praised anganwadi workers as a "second mother" to children and said ICDS has significantly reduced infant and maternal deaths.

Emphasising women's empowerment, he said economic and social self-reliance is vital as inequality and illiteracy persist.

"Women must achieve full literacy and scientific temper," he said, adding that educating one girl uplifts an entire family.

He highlighted state welfare schemes, noting over six crore women have travelled free under Shakti and 1.26 crore women received Rs 2,000 monthly under Gruhalakshmi.

Karnataka also pays the country's highest honorarium to anganwadi workers.

The government has spent over Rs 1.04 lakh crore on guarantee schemes designed to strengthen women "economically and educationally".

Accusing the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi of opposing these guarantees, he said freedom is meaningful only when women are empowered.

This year's budget allocates Rs 95,000 crore for women's welfare.

Though ICDS is a central scheme, Siddaramaiah said Karnataka provides additional support. "If Rs 2,700 comes from the Central government, the state provides Rs 8,500," he said.

Citing the impact of schemes like Shakti and Gruhalakshmi, he said Karnataka now ranks first nationwide in per capita income, with rural women's workforce participation rising 21 per cent after Shakti's rollout.

The government's five guarantees include 200 units of free electricity under Gruha Jyoti; Rs 2,000 monthly assistance to the woman head of every household under Gruhalakshmi; and 10kg of free rice per BPL member under Anna Bhagya.

Yuva Nidhi scheme offers a monthly allowance to unemployed graduates and diploma holders aged 18–25, while Shakti ensures free travel for women on the buses run by the state-transport corporation. *—Salar News*

Dinesh Gundu Rao gives letter on farmers to Modi

MANGALURU, 28 NOV

Dakshina Kannada district in-charge minister Dinesh Gundu Rao handed over Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's letter on farmers' grievances to Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his stop in Mangaluru on Friday.

The letter sought Central government's intervention to address the price crash in maize and green gram, resolve issues related to MSP and ethanol quota allocation, and ensure farmers receive fair prices.

It also urged the PM to direct NAFED, FCI and NCCF to procure crops at MSP to stabilise markets.

Rao said the matter needs Modi's immediate attention. Former chief minister Basavaraj Bommai, however, accused the State of shifting responsibility to the Centre, saying it has failed to procure 10 lakh metric tonnes despite issuing orders and not designating any agency or releasing funds." *—Salar News*

Kolar police using drones to keep tabs on criminals

KOLAR, 28 NOV

Kolar police are using drones to keep tabs on illegal activities, with drones being deployed in places where the terrain is tough, and police movement is difficult. Two drones are being deployed, and their videos will be monitored at the control room attached to the Superintendent of Police's office.

Kolar SP B Nikhil said the videos will be monitored by a team headed by an Inspector rank official, and the inputs provided by the drones will be shared with police stations with specific instructions if anything unusual is noticed.

Nikhil said drones are already being used at some places under the Kolar Rural and Vemagal police stations. As crime is increasing in the industrial areas near Vemagal and Narasapur, attempts are being made to reduce crime and to create awareness about tackling crime.

He said drones will be used more in the industrial areas, and the input provided by them will come in handy for the police during times of group clashes or during huge processions. *—Salar News*

One PSI fired, another relieved for gold robbery

DAVANAGERE, 28 NOV

The Home Department has taken strong action against two Police Sub-Inspectors who allegedly robbed a goldsmith at gunpoint.

One of the PSIs has been dismissed while the other has been suspended pending departmental inquiry.

Malappa Yallappa Chippalakatti, the PSI of the Hamsabhavi Police Station in Byadagi taluk in Haveri district, identified as the prime accused, has been dismissed with effect from 24 November, as he was a probationer.

The other accused, Praveenkumar, a PSI attached to the Sagar Town Police Station in Shivamogga district, has been suspended.

The East Zone IGP, Dr BR Ravikantegowda, said the duo, along with three others, allegedly robbed gold ornament manufacturer Vishwanath Arkasali from Karwar in the early hours of 24 November.

The gang brandished a toy gun, threatened him, and then robbed 78.15 grams of gold, which included a gold biscuit and jewellery. The case was registered at Davangere's KTJ Nagar Station. *—Salar News*

MISUSE OF TAXPAYERS' MONEY

₹42.93L spent on Speaker's chair at Suvarna Vidhana Soudha: RTI

BELAGAVI, 28 NOV

Speaker UT Khader's new chair and its accompanying tale in the Suvarna Vidhana Soudha in Belagavi costs a total of Rs 42.93 lakh, according to RTI activist Bhimappa Gadad. Khader had directed the instalments to be based on the lines of the Karnataka Legislative Assembly's dais in Bengaluru's Vidhana Soudha.

Gadad, who filed the RTI petition and made the details public. He alleged that Rs 1.98 lakh has been spent on replacing the plywood, frame and cushioning of the Legislative Council Chair.

Addressing the media in Belagavi on Friday, Gadad accused the State government of misusing taxpayers' money.

"In 2012, during the inauguration of the Suvarna Vidhana Soudha, furniture worth Rs 36.60 lakh was purchased for the resting arrangements of the then President of India. Now even that record has been surpassed," he alleged.

He further stated that on 22 February, 2023, the government released Rs 13.34 lakh to renowned artists to create seven oil portraits of great leaders, each measuring 8×5 feet. Another Rs 67.67 lakh was spent on installing a total of 11 portraits of prominent leaders and dignitaries inside the Vidhana Soudha, as well as on preparing a special oil painting for the 'Anubhava Mantapa', he claimed. According to Gadad, an expert committee of the Karnataka Lalithakala Academy that inspected the completed portraits had found that many of the facial features did not resemble the real figures. On the committee's recommendation, the government approved a fresh expenditure of Rs 28.49 lakh on 25 October, 2024, to redo the paintings. Furthermore, on 4 February, 2025, an additional Rs 25.84 lakh was released for installing the Anubhava Mantapa painting and handing over a Gandhi artwork. *—Salar News*

LULU BEAUTY FEST BENGALURU 2025 IS ALL SET TO DAZZLE

Following the resounding success of its previous editions, the Lulu Beauty Fest Bengaluru is proud to announce its grand return. This two-day extravaganza will take place on 6 and 7 December, 2025, at the LuLu Mall, Rajaji Nagar, Bengaluru. The winners will be awarded the prestigious titles of "Iconic Walk with Lulu" Face of Lulu 2025 - Men and Face of Lulu 2025 - Women. These titles come with exclusive year-long contracts, making them the official brand ambassadors for Lulu's beauty and fashion verticals. Auditions begin from 6 December and the finale is on 7 December. Winners will be awarded a cash prize of Rs 1 lakh, along with brand endorsement opportunities. Attendees can enjoy free makeover sessions conducted by professional art-ists. There is a unique themed photo booth too. An exclusive offer spans across Lulu Hypermarket, Lulu fashion and Lulu connect at Lulu Mall Rajaji Nagar, Lulu Daily, and REO at VR Mall Whitefield, Lulu Daily at Forum South Bengaluru, and Lulu Daily at M5 E-City Mall Electronic City, will offer up to 50 per cent off on beauty brands. This offer is valid till 7 December. The Title sponsors includes Fiama and Engage, powered by Yardley and Vivel, Associate Sponsors are Ponds, Tresemme, Enchanteur and The derma co, Education partner – JD school of Design, Official Media Partner Newsreach.

PHOTO: ANI

Arunachal allows poll staff to vote on-the-spot

ITANAGAR, 28 NOV

For the first time in Arunachal Pradesh, the State Election Commission (SEC) will allow polling personnel to vote on-the-spot in the upcoming municipal elections, replacing postal ballots. Poll staff from Itanagar and Pasighat must apply to their municipal returning officer (MRO) three days before polling with their election duty order. MRO will verify identities, mark names on the electoral roll, and provide ballot papers, with voting conducted under supervision. The 12th panchayat and third municipal polls are scheduled for 15 December, covering 27 zilla parishads, 2,103 gram panchayats, and municipal wards. Over 40,000 personnel will be deployed, with EVMs for municipalities and ballot boxes for panchayats. *—PTI*

Security forces hunt for terrorists in J&K's Udhampur

JAMMU, 28 NOV

Security forces launched a cordon and search operation on Friday after getting information about suspicious movements in the higher reaches of Udhampur district in Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. Searches are underway in the Chigla-Balotha area of the Basantgarh belt of the district. Basantgarh is located along a traditional infiltration route often used by Pakistani terrorists who cross the border in Kathua and move through the higher reaches towards Doda and Kishtwar districts before heading into the Kashmir Valley. Officials said the army and the police have launched a joint operation after receiving information about the movement of three people in the Balotha area. *—PTI*

Haryana STF foils Karnal attack, arrests gangster

CHANDIGARH, 28 NOV

Haryana Police's Special Task Force (STF) arrested Amar Singh a key member of the Lawrence Bishnoi-Kala Rana/Nauni Rana gang, on 25 November from the Karnal-Indri road. Acting on intelligence, the team recovered a foreign-made automatic pistol and ammunition. During police questioning, Singh admitted bringing explosives to Karnal on orders from gang leader Nauni Rana, intending a major attack. STF recovered two hand grenades and an improvised explosive device near Jhinjhari village, which were safely disposed of by the Bomb Disposal Squad. Singh, involved in multiple murders, kidnappings, armed robberies, and illegal weapons cases across Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Punjab, has been linked to high-profile crimes, including the killing of a political leader on the Noida-Ghaziabad border. *—PTI*

Modi announces assistance for cyclone in SL

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

India on Friday delivered essential relief supplies to cyclone-battered Sri Lanka with Prime Minister Narendra Modi conveying to the island nation that New Delhi stands ready provide more aid to it to deal with the situation. New Delhi launched 'Operation Sagar Bandhu' to assist Sri Lanka in its hour of crisis and the first tranche of relief materials were handed after the consignments were transported by Indian Navy's aircraft carrier INS Vikrant and frontline ship INS Udaigiri. At least 56 people have been killed in Sri Lanka due to floods and landslides. Over 43,900 people from 12,313 families have been hit by the extreme weather conditions, according to Sri Lankan authorities. *—PTI*

CEC has blood on his hands for BLO deaths: TMC

Two more BLOs died in Gujarat & West Bengal in two days

KOLKATA/MEHSANA, 28 NOV

TMC delegation, including MPs Derek O'Brien, Kalyan Banerjee, and other party leaders, arrives for a meeting with the Election Commission, outside Nirvachan Sadan, in New Delhi, on Friday *PHOTO: PTI*

With West Bengal reporting the fourth (booth-level officer) BLO death since the exercise began in the state on 4 November, a Trinamool Congress (TMC) delegation on Friday met the full bench of the Election Commission (EC) in Delhi and accused the poll panel chief of having "blood on his hands".

Two primary school teachers deployed as booth-level officers in the ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls died of cardiac arrest in West Bengal's Murshidabad and Gujarat's Mehsana, sparking accusations of tremendous work pressure on them.

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav also made a fresh attack on the EC over the SIR, claiming it was a "big conspiracy" against the people of the country that could push citizens into a state "worse than the colonial era".

SIR is currently underway in 12 states & Union territories.

During the day, the 10-member TMC delegation, led by Rajya Sabha leader Derek O'Brien, met the EC officials. The delegation also consisted of Lok Sabha MPs Mahua Moitra, Satabdi Roy, Kalyan Banerjee, Pratima Mondal, Sajda Ahmed, and Rajya Sabha MPs Dola Sen, Mamata Thakur, Saket Gokhale, and Prakash Chik Barik.

"We started the meeting by stating that the CEC has blood on his hands. We raised five questions. After this, Kalyan Banerjee, Mahua Moitra, and Mamata Thakur spoke and shared whatever they had to in about 40 minutes," O'Brien said.

Additionally, in Mehsana, Dinesh Raval, 50, who was a teacher in a government primary school in Sudasana village, died of heart attack at his home in the intervening night of Thursday and Friday, Satlasana police station sub inspector Udaysinh Zala said.

While the opposition Congress and teachers' union linked the BLO's death to excessive work pressure and lack of facilities, police denied the allegations.

In West Bengal's Murshidabad district, Zakir Hossain, a teacher at a state-run primary school who was deployed as a BLO, collapsed on Thursday afternoon after complaining of severe chest pain and was rushed to a nearby hospital, where he died later that night, family members said.

Relatives claimed Hossain had been under "tremendous pressure" juggling SIR duties and regular teaching work.

TMC leaders, including Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, have accused the EC of burdening BLOs with an "inhumane" and "unplanned" workload. *—PTI*

MUKHYAMANTRI MAHILA YOJANA

Bihar CM to distribute ₹1,000 cr to 10 lakh women

PATNA, 28 NOV

- The scheme was launched in September, shortly before the assembly elections, during a virtual event featuring Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Bihar Chief Minister **Nitish Kumar** has announced the disbursement of Rs 1,000 crore under the Mukhyamantri Mahila Rojgar Yojana, benefiting 10 lakh women entrepreneurs in the state. Each beneficiary received Rs 10,000 via the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system, with the event held at his official residence and attended by cabinet colleagues and senior officials.

Speaking to reporters after the event, Rural Development Minister Shravan Kumar remarked, "A total of 1.56 crore women have received the money so far." He encouraged beneficiaries to utilise the funds for self-employment, stating that those who demonstrate progress could eventually qualify for additional assistance of Rs 2 lakh each.

The scheme was launched in September, shortly before the assembly elections, during a virtual event featuring Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Disbursement took place in batches, which led to accusations from opposition parties of vote-buying as elections approached.

Despite criticism, the programme appeared to resonate with voters, as evidence shows an unprecedented turnout of women at the polls, contributing to the ruling NDA's robust majority.

Responding to queries about complaints from women who had not received their funds, the minister noted, "The scheme makes it clear that recipients of the aid must get registered with a Jeevika self-help group in their area. Those who have not done so are being persuaded to do the needful, and they will get the benefit." *—PTI*

Sengottaiyan is BJP's sleeper cell: TN Minister

PUDUKKOTTAI, 28 NOV

> Vijay has commenced his political journey like MGR. He keeps photos of MGR and (former CM) Annadurai ... Vijay commenced his political journey like MGR, and he will surely succeed,
>
> -KA Sengottaiyan

Tamil Nadu Minister **S Regupathy** on Friday claimed that KA Sengottaiyan was a "sleeper cell member" of the BJP sent on a specific assignment to join actor Vijay-led TVK. He also alleged that the former minister, who had a long stint with the AIADMK, was being remotely controlled by the BJP.

Sengottaiyan joined the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam in the presence of its founder Vijay, after his expulsion by AIADMK General Secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami, recently.

"I see Sengottaiyan as BJP's sleeper cell member. This will be proved soon," Regupathy told reporters here.

When pointed out that he had joined the TVK, as the BJP had let him down, he replied that he would not have gone if the BJP had not deceived him. "He is the BJP's agent. He is at the beck and call of Union Home Minister Amit Shah. Sengottaiyan joined the TVK to bring the TVK into the BJP's alliance," he said.

On Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Minister PK Sekar Babu's invitation to Sengottaiyan to join the DMK, he said it was but natural to invite someone if he quits a party. *—PTI*

'Assam Rifles patrolling party shot at along border'

GUWAHATI, 28 NOV

An Assam Rifles patrolling party came under fire from unidentified militants along the Indo-Myanmar border on Friday, a defence spokesperson said here.

The security personnel "immediately retaliated with control and caution" considering civilian safety, the official added.

The spokesperson, however, did not specify the exact location of the incident.

"Operations are currently underway, with additional troops being deployed in the area," he said.

It was not immediately known whether there were any casualties, the spokesperson added. *—PTI*

PM Narendra Modi with Goa CM Pramod Sawant at the unveiling a 77-foot-tall bronze statue of Lord Ram, in Goa, on Friday *PHOTO: PTI*

PM unveils 77-foot-tall Lord Ram statue in Goa

PANAJI, 28 NOV

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said India is witnessing a "cultural renaissance", and the construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya, the Kashi Vishwanath Dham, and expansion of the Mahakal Mahalok in Ujjain reflect the "awakening" of the nation.

The prime minister was addressing a gathering after unveiling a 77-foot-tall bronze statue of Lord Ram as part of Shree Samsthan Gokarn Jeevottam Mutt's 550th year celebrations at Partagali, in Cancona, South Goa. It is the tallest statue of Ram in the world, as per the Goa government.

"The restoration of the Ram temple in Ayodhya, grand redevelopment of Kashi Vishwanath Dham, and expansion of the Mahakal Mahalok in Ujjain, all these reflect the awakening of our nation, which is advancing its spiritual heritage with renewed strength," Modi said. Referring to Goa's history, Modi said there were times when Goa's temples and local traditions had to face destruction.

Goa governor Ashok Gajapathi Raju, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant and Shrimad Vidhyadheesh Teerth Swami of the Mutt were present at the event. The Ram statue, made by renowned sculptor Ram Sutar whose past projects include the Statue of Unity in Gujarat, is the tallest Ram statue in the world, claimed Goa PWD minister Digambar Kamat.

Shree Samsthan Gokarn Jeevottam Mutt is among India's oldest monastic institutions, known for its spiritual, cultural and social contributions, and holds a prominent place in the Saraswat community. *—PTI*

Rohit Pawar seeks probe into ₹111 cr PWD embezzlement case

MUMBAI, 28 NOV

- A PWD employee reportedly submitted a request at a nationalised bank for a demand draft of Rs 111.65 crore, drawing from a PWD account holding contractors' deposits.

NCP (SP) leader **Rohit Pawar** has called for an investigation following an alleged attempt by officials from the Public Works Department (PWD) to embezzle approximately Rs 111 crore from contractors' security deposit accounts in Palghar district.

In a social media post, Pawar noted that the attempt was thwarted due to the vigilance of bank employees, raising serious concerns about state bureaucracy accountability.

A PWD employee reportedly submitted a request at a nationalised bank for a demand draft of Rs 111.65 crore, drawing from a PWD account holding contractors' deposits.

Bank staff detected the unusually high value of the request, prompting immediate checks that revealed no authorisation for the transaction.

Pawar highlighted, "At a time when contractors are struggling... this is shocking."

He demanded a criminal case against the involved officials and called for a review of mechanisms governing security deposits.

PWD officials have launched an internal inquiry, with the employee in question currently untraceable. *—PTI*

'NUMBERS KEEP DISAPPOINTING'

Cong calls GPD rate unsustainable without reviving private investments

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

Jairam Ramesh *PHOTO: PTI*

The Congress party has expressed dissatisfaction with the latest GDP figures, labelling them as "disappointing" and warning that high growth rates are unsustainable without a revival in private investment.

This criticism follows the Indian economy's robust growth of 8.2 per cent for the July-September quarter, the highest in six quarters.

Congress General Secretary Jairam Ramesh remarked, "The numbers continue to be disappointing. There has been no upswing in Gross Fixed Capital Formation. High GDP growth rates are simply not sustainable in the absence of any renewed momentum in private investment. That is clearly not in evidence."

He also highlighted concerns regarding the "unrealistically low GDP deflator," which indicates an inflation rate of only 0.5 per cent, contrasting sharply with the rising costs faced by households nationwide.

The latest government data revealed a GDP growth of 8.2 per cent, surpassing the 7.8 per cent from the previous quarter and showing significant improvement from the 5.6 per cent recorded in 2024.

The manufacturing sector, contributing 14 per cent to the GDP, surged by 9.1 per cent in the second quarter, up from just 2.2 per cent during the same period last year. *—PTI*

'50% CEILING QUOTA BREACHED'

SC orders Maharashtra to hold local polls

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

- At the outset, senior advocate Balbir Singh, appearing for the SEC, said that 50 per cent ceiling on quota has been breached only in 40 municipal councils and 17 nagar panchayats.

The Supreme Court on Friday asked the Maharashtra government and its state election commission to conduct local body elections and made it clear that poll results of all bodies, including where 50 per cent ceiling on quota have been breached, will depend on its verdict.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi also said that as many as 27 pleas concerning OBC reservation in local bodies will be taken up for final hearing by a three-judge bench on 21 January, 2026.

In May 2025, the bench had directed the Maharashtra government and the SEC to conduct the long-pending elections within four months, and to grant OBC reservation based on the legal framework that existed prior to the Banthia Commission report.

At the outset, senior advocate Balbir Singh, appearing for the state election commission (SEC), said that 50 per cent ceiling on quota has been breached only in 40 municipal councils and 17 nagar panchayats.

He said there are a total 246 municipal councils and 42 nagar panchayats where the poll process has begun and there are "only 40 municipal councils, out of 246, where reservation is exceeding 50 per cent and similarly, there are 17, out of 42 nagar panchyats, where this ceiling is breached".

Taking the statement into consideration, the bench said the SEC can proceed with the election but the results will be dependent on the final outcome of the case.

However, the results of these local bodies will also depend on the final verdict in the case, the bench said. *—PTI*

PNB fraud: Court denies Choksi's plea to drop FEO

MUMBAI, 28 NOV

PHOTO: PTI

In a significant blow to absconding diamond trader **Mehul Choksi**, a special court has rejected his application to dismiss proceedings declaring him a Fugitive Economic Offender (FEO) in the Punjab National Bank (PNB) fraud case.

Following his arrest in Belgium in April, Choksi sought to quash Enforcement Directorate's (ED) FEO application, arguing he is in custody for pending cases in India and an extradition request has been filed by Indian authorities. The ED opposed Choksi's plea, contending he is reluctant to return to India as he contests extradition proceedings in Belgium. The agency argued, "The FEO proceedings terminate only when an absconding accused appears, so it cannot be terminated now."

Under the FEO Act, an individual can be declared an FEO if a warrant exists against them for an offence exceeding Rs 100 crore. This declaration allows the probe agency to confiscate their assets. A Belgian court upheld India's extradition request for Choksi on 17 October, though he has appealed the decision in the India's Supreme Court. *—PTI*

Cyclone Ditwah forces flights to land in T'puram

T'PURAM, 28 NOV

In a recent development, five flights heading to Colombo were diverted to Thiruvananthapuram International Airport because of adverse weather conditions linked to a Cyclone Ditwah warning over Colombo, informed the Thiruvananthapuram International Airport Ltd (TIAL). Among the diverted flights were two SriLankan Airlines services, one from Dubai, one from Doha, an Etihad Airways flight from Abu Dhabi, and an AirAsia flight from Kuala Lumpur, as well as an Indigo flight from Mumbai. Notably, the Etihad Airways aircraft landed at 3.44am, with the last flight arriving at 9.49am. TIAL officials indicated that more diversions may occur due to the persistently poor weather conditions in Colombo. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Abhijit Mitra moves Delhi HC over suit filed by journalists

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

Abhijit Iyer Mitra has approached the Delhi High Court seeking dismissal of a defamation suit filed against him by nine women journalists from Newslaundry, who claim he made abusive remarks about them. Justice Purushaindra Kumar Kaurav queried Mitra's counsel on the basis for the application, who stated that the main advocate was unavailable and requested a deferment. The case has been rescheduled for hearing on 26 February 2026. The journalists seek an injunction, a written apology, and damages amounting to Rs 2 crore for what they describe as "defamatory, false, malicious and unsubstantiated allegations" made by Mitra on X (formerly Twitter). His lawyer conceded that the language used was inappropriate and committed to deleting the posts in question. *—PTI*

Kashmir's coldest Nov since 2007, Srinagar hits -4.5°C

SRINAGAR, 28 NOV

Kashmir is experiencing its coldest November since 2007, with minimum temperatures plummeting below freezing across many areas, according to officials. Srinagar recorded a chilling minimum temperature of minus 4.5 degrees Celsius last night, a slight drop from the previous night. Officials noted that Srinagar's temperatures are over four degrees below the seasonal norm. Konibal in Pulwama district reported the valleys' lowest temperature of minus 6 degrees Celsius. Other significant readings included minus 4.4 degrees in Qazigund and minus 4.8 degrees in Kupwara. Additionally, the IMD forecasted dry conditions across Kashmir until 10 December. *—PTI*

Scientists discover 13 new amphibian species in NE India

SHILLONG, 28 NOV

Researchers at the Wildlife Institute of Indi have identified 13 new amphibian species in Northeast India, six in Arunachal Pradesh, three in Meghalaya and one each in Assam, Mizoram, Nagaland and Manipur. The 2019–24 study, supported by the National Geographic Society and the Meghalaya Biodiversity, focused on the Raorchestes bush frog genus. Key finds include R lawngtalaiensis (Mizoram), R barakensis (Assam), R narpuhensis and R boulengeri (Meghalaya), R monolithus (Manipur) and R khonoma (Nagaland). Led by Scholar Bitupan Boruah with herpetologists Dr Abhijit Das and Dr Deepak Veerappan, the research used acoustic, genetic and morphological analyses across different sites and protected areas. It also refined distributions and synonymised four species. *—PTI*

India attains 'major power' status on Asia Index 2025

Index credits economic growth and Op Sindoor's success

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

India has attained "major power" status for the first time in the Asia Power Index-2025, driven by strong economic growth and rising military capability, the Australia-based Lowy Institute said on Friday.

The upgrade is partly attributed to India's performance in Operation Sindoor, launched in May 2025, which contributed to favourable expert assessments of its combat readiness.

The annual Asia Power Index measures resources and influence across the region to determine relative power. India, which scored 38.1 points and ranked among "middle powers" in 2024, rose to 40 points this year, crossing the threshold into the "major power" category. It remains third overall, behind the United States (80.5) and China (73.7), with Japan in fourth place at 38.8 points.

India, which scored 38.1 points in 2024, rose to 40 points this year, crossing the threshold into the "major power" category **PHOTO: PTI**

India also ranks third in economic capability and future resources. A rise in inward investment pushed it to ninth place in economic relationships, overtaking Japan in economic capability for the first time. The index says India surpassed China as the top destination for inward investment after the US, reflecting global supply-chain diversification and India's growing appeal to investors.

The institute said India's economic momentum has been matched by improvements in military capacity and gains in geopolitical relevance, measured through international leverage, connectivity and technological influence.

However, it noted that India's diplomatic influence and defence networks have not kept pace with its expanding resources. Its defence-network ranking slipped two places to 11, overtaken by the Philippines and Thailand, widening what the index terms the "Power Gap", the difference between a nation's expected power based on its resources and its realised influence.

The report concludes that while India's economic and military strengths have consolidated its position as a major power, narrowing the gap between ambition and actual influence will require stronger regional partnerships and more cohesive diplomatic engagement. *—PTI*

After Delhites, Mumbaikars struggle to breathe

DELHI/MUMBAI, 28 NOV

Delhi's air quality remained in the 'very poor' category on Friday with an AQI of 384, extending the capital's two-week pollution spell.

Twenty monitoring stations recorded very poor readings and 18 touched severe, according to the CPCB. The IMD reported a minimum temperature of 8.1°C and 95% humidity, with moderate fog expected through the day.

Amid the deepening crisis, Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi sought an urgent parliamentary discussion, calling pollution a "health emergency" and questioning the Prime Minister's "silence".

In a video shared after meeting a group of mothers, he said India's children were "growing up breathing toxic air" and demanded a strict, enforceable action plan. Several participants highlighted rising respiratory illnesses and warned of long-term impacts.

Former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal urged the Centre to immediately remove 18% GST on air and water purifiers, calling clean air a basic right.

Vehicles move on Western Express Highway amid low-visibility as a layer of smog covers the city, in Mumbai **PHOTO: PTI**

He said citizens were forced to pay more "instead of getting solutions" as air quality is forecast to stay very poor through the week.

Doctors have advised regular screening for vulnerable groups as toxic air continues to aggravate underlying diseases.

In Mumbai, where AQI has consistently crossed 300, the BMC issued 53 stop-work notices to construction sites and warned contractors over non-functional AQI sensors. The Bombay High Court rejected arguments blaming Ethiopian volcanic ash and said construction-linked pollution can be curbed quickly if guidelines are followed.

A five-member committee will inspect compliance, with action-taken reports due on 15 December. *—PTI*

Delhi police detain 40 foreign nationals linked to drug case

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

In a swift operation, the Delhi Police, in collaboration with Telangana Police and the Narcotics Control Bureau, apprehended ten alleged drug peddlers and confiscated narcotics worth Rs 12 crore during coordinated raids across Delhi-NCR.

Among those arrested were three foreign nationals, while forty other foreign accomplices have been detained for deportation proceedings. According to Joint Commissioner of Police (Crime) Surender Kumar, the police action follows the dismantling of a drug trafficking network based in Hyderabad that utilised courier services to distribute narcotics.

Investigations revealed the drugs were sourced from Delhi and supplied to Telangana. *—PTI*

SC ASKS LAW PANEL TO REVIEW

Plea questions Hindu personal law's reach over Buddhists

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

The Supreme Court on Friday asked the Law Commission of India to consider a petition by a Buddhist group challenging the application of Hindu personal laws to the Buddhist community.

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi directed that the plea be treated as a formal representation claiming several existing provisions violate the fundamental rights and cultural practices of Buddhists, requiring statutory and constitutional review.

Buddhists are presently governed by the same personal laws as Hindus under the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956, and the Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act, 1956. Article 25 includes Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs within the definition of "Hindu" for the purpose of these laws.

At the outset, the CJI questioned whether the petitioner expected a mandamus to amend constitutional or personal law provisions. The petitioner's counsel said Buddhists constitute a distinct community and had repeatedly made representations.

The bench said the Law Commission is the country's expert legal-reform body and noted a December 2024 communication stating that the 21st Commission is examining related issues during its deliberations on the Uniform Civil Code. Directing the registry to forward the complete case record, the court said the panel may allow a representative of the petitioner to assist it. *—PTI*

SC fumes as H'yana women asked for proof of periods

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

The Supreme Court on Friday issued notices to the Centre and other authorities over a plea alleging that female sanitation workers at Haryana's Maharishi Dayanand University were asked to submit photographs of their private parts to prove menstruation.

A bench including Justices BV Nagarathna said the incident "reflects the mindset" of those involved. "In Karnataka, they are giving period leave. Will proof now be demanded?" Justice Nagarathna asked, noting alternative staff could have been deployed.

SC Bar Association president Vikas Singh called it "a gross criminal case." Three MDU staffers were booked on 31 October. The university suspended two contract supervisors and ordered an internal probe. The plea seeks a detailed inquiry. The matter is listed for 15 December. *—PTI*

India Gate agitation: Court grants bail to 9 protesters

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

A Delhi court on Friday granted bail to nine protesters arrested after a scuffle with police outside the Parliament Street police station. The judicial magistrate allowed their release on a bond of Rs 20,000 each while hearing bail pleas of nine of the 17 people detained in the case.

However, some protesters will remain in custody as they also face separate charges for allegedly using pepper spray on police personnel during the confrontation.

A day earlier, the court had sent four protesters to two-day police custody and remanded the remaining 13 to one-day judicial custody. *—PTI*

Gangster linked to shooting at Kapil Sharma's restaurant held

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

Delhi Police have arrested a suspected gangster linked to the shooting at comedian Kapil Sharma's restaurant in Canada on 7 August, officials said on Friday.

The accused, Bandhu Man Singh, allegedly provided logistical support to the gunmen and was detained from Ludhiana, Punjab. Initial findings suggest Singh assisted the assailants by providing a vehicle and arranging a secure parking spot for it after the attack.

A senior officer stated that Singh is a close associate of Canada-based gangster Goldy Dhillon, who is believed to run multiple extortion rackets targeting businessmen and high-profile individuals overseas. Investigators say Singh coordinated with Dhillon's network and was involved in the wider conspiracy to intimidate the popular artist by targeting his restaurant.

Police also discovered that Singh fled Canada after a case was registered against him there and are verifying his travel route. A Chinese pistol and cartridges were recovered from his possession.

Further investigations are underway to trace additional conspirators and assess the gang's international operations. *— PTI*

Sanjauli Mosque: Samiti vows to halt Friday prayers, awaits talk

SHIMLA, 28 NOV

The Devbhoomi Sangharsh Samiti on Thursday said it would not permit Friday prayers at the Sanjauli mosque, which a court has declared illegal, and urged the Muslim community to refrain from visiting the site to maintain communal harmony. Members of the samiti, protesting in Sanjauli for the past 10 days, also performed Shastra Puja as part of their ongoing agitation.

Co-convener Vijay Sharma said the group is awaiting its meeting with the administration on November 29, after which it will decide its next steps. "If the meeting fails to produce positive results, we will intensify our agitation against the mosque," he said.

Sharma alleged that prayers were still being offered at the structure despite a court order deeming it illegal and directing its demolition. He termed the continuation of prayers "very unfortunate." *—PTI*

Protest against illegal construction of Sanjauli mosque in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh **PHOTO: PTI**

BOTH NABBED IN UP

2 men try to cremate mannequin for insurance

HAPUR, 28 NOV

Two Delhi-based traders were arrested in Uttar Pradesh after they allegedly attempted to cremate a mannequin to fraudulently claim a Rs 50-lakh insurance payout, police said on Friday.

The incident took place on Thursday at Brijghat, where four men arrived in a Haryana-registered car carrying what they claimed was a corpse. After purchasing ghee and other items for the last rites, they quietly placed the "body" on a pyre.

Their suspicious behaviour alerted Nitin, a municipal employee at the cremation ghat. When he lifted the sheet, he discovered it was a mannequin. He immediately informed the municipal authorities, who then alerted police.

Incident in Brijghat area of UP **PHOTO: SCREENGRAB**

- Delhi-based traders' suspicious behaviour alerted municipal employee, who then lifted the sheet, and discovered that it was a mannequin

A police team rushed to the spot and recovered the car along with three mannequins. Two accused, Kamal Somani and his associate Ashish Khurana, both residents of Delhi, were arrested, while two others fled.

During questioning, Somani, a textile trader, confessed he had a debt of Rs 50 lakh and devised the plan to repay it. He allegedly obtained the Aadhaar and PAN cards of Anshul, brother of his employee Neeraj, took out a Rs 50-lakh Tata AIA life insurance policy in Anshul's name nearly a year ago, and paid premiums regularly. The plan was to send Anshul out of town, cremate a mannequin as his "body", secure a receipt and death certificate, and claim the payout.

Police video-called Anshul, who was in Prayagraj, and he confirmed he was unaware his death was being faked. Circle Officer Stuti Singh said a case of insurance fraud has been registered and efforts are underway to track the absconding suspects. *—PTI*

SC bins Byju's plea over BCCI's claim settlement

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

The Supreme Court on Friday dismissed a plea by Byju Raveendran, promoter of Think and Learn Pvt Ltd, challenging an NCLAT order that required the settlement of the BCCI's claim to be placed before the Committee of Creditors (CoC).

A bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and KV Viswanathan upheld the 17 April ruling of the NCLAT and asked senior advocate Navin Pahwa, appearing for Raveendran, to proceed in accordance with the directions ordered by the tribunal body.

The NCLAT had held that CoC approval was mandatory for the BCCI's application seeking withdrawal of insolvency proceedings against Byju's.

The Supreme Court noted that it had already dismissed similar appeals filed by the BCCI and Riju Raveendran in July

The court observed that the CoC was constituted during the pendency of the matter and that any withdrawal or settlement must comply with the statutory framework governing CIRP.

Pahwa argued that the earlier petition was filed before the CoC was formed and that Raveendran had personally paid the BCCI dues, altering the nature of the dispute.

The bench disagreed, stating that accepting this argument would "frustrate the entire process." *—PTI*

DELHI'S 1ST HOT AIR BALLOON

At a time when Delhi is choking due to pollution, Delhi Development Authority (DDA) is starting a hot-air balloon adventure for the public from 29 November at Baansera Park. The ticket costs Rs 3,000 per person, excluding taxes, for a 120 feet high ride. The trip will range between seven and 12 minutes, with four people in each ride. Each day, four hours of flying time will be allowed. The private company will operate on a revenue-sharing model with advertisements on the balloons

PHOTO: X/@LTGOVDELHI

India's new data law threatens privacy: Critics

India's new data protection law promises privacy safeguards, but critics warn it expands government power, curtails right-to-information access, and threatens press freedom.

India's new data privacy rules, requiring companies like Amazon, Meta, and OpenAI to minimise the collection of personal information, came into force this month. The Digital Personal Data Protection Act (DPDP) aims to secure Indian users' personal data, while guaranteeing their consent.

Under the DPDP rules, firms will only be able to collect customer data that is necessary for a specific purpose. They must allow users to opt out and tell them if their information is involved in a data breach.

India's new data privacy rules, requiring companies like Amazon, Meta, and OpenAI to minimise the collection of personal information, came into force this month

PHOTO: FREEPIK

GOVT OVERSIGHT SPARKS PRIVACY FEARS

The DPDP and its rules "create a simple, citizen-focused and innovation-friendly framework for the responsible use of digital personal data," said India's Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology in a statement.

However, the DPDP has been criticized for granting the government broad powers to access personal data without strong independent oversight.

India's DPDP has been compared to the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which requires strict consent, data minimization, and has an independent regulator. The DPDP gives a government-appointed Data Protection Board — with just four members — the task of overseeing privacy for some 1.4 billion people, raising concerns over compromised privacy and free speech.

EUROPE'S GDPR SETS HIGH STANDARDS

Experts say the EU's GDPR, which has substantially influenced legislation in nearly 160 countries, firmly prioritises individual privacy through strict consent requirements, data minimisation principles, and a strong, independent regulatory oversight that limits government intrusion.

"India's data protection act and rules are likely to remain paper milestones when it comes to genuinely protecting the privacy of its people, since it mainly formalises various aspects of data processing," Prateek Waghre, head of programs at Tech Global Institute, a digital policy and human rights nonprofit, told DW.

Waghre also claimed the government could coerce citizens and businesses into turning over data through sweeping provisions and presumption of consent.

RTI AMENDMENT RAISES ACCOUNTABILITY FEARS

Perhaps one particularly controversial aspect of the DPDP is its direct impact on the Right to Information (RTI) Act, under which citizens could previously seek access to records held by public authorities if "larger public interest" justified the disclosure.

Critics have noted that the DPDP amends the public interest provision so that even if the requested information relates to the public interest, authorities can deny its disclosure.

"The amendment ... will potentially lead to a blanket denial of personal information needed by citizens to expose corruption and hold governments accountable," Anjali Bhardwaj, a co-convenor of the National Campaign for People's Right to Information, told DW.

GOVERNMENT DENIES DILUTING RTI RIGHTS

Amrita Johri, a campaigner for digital transparency, told DW that the change to RTI regulations removes earlier stipulations that permitted access to personal information if relevant to public interest or public activity.

"The government has used claims of 'no data available' to dodge transparency on critical public matters, further undermining the spirit of the RTI Act as a tool for democratic accountability," said Johri, who noted that the right to question and speak freely "is central to democracy."

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology said that it does not believe the DPDP dilutes the RTI.

The ministry's Secretary S Krishnan told the daily paper Hindustan Times that the DPDP only removed "a redundant provision" and did not affect citizens' right to information.

Krishnan claimed that the RTI Act already permitted public authorities to share any information if it served the public interest, regardless of exemptions.

FINES 'THREATEN' JOURNALISM

Reporters and journalists' organisations like the Press Club of India and Editors Guild of India (EGI) remain apprehensive, however. The DPDP classifies them as "significant data fiduciaries" (SDFs) for routine work involving personal data collection, processing, and publication.

A data fiduciary is any person or organisation that decides why and how personal data is processed. They are responsible for protecting that data and ensuring it is used legally and fairly.

Reporters must therefore obtain explicit consent before using individuals' data in stories such as naming corrupt officials or exposing scams — which could make investigative reporting impossible without prior approval.

"We urge the government to urgently provide explicit clarification exempting bona fide journalism from these rules to safeguard press freedom and the public's right to know."

Non-compliance with the DPDP can result in substantial monetary penalties for data fiduciaries, with fines potentially reaching up to approximately $30 million for every instance of violation.

"This will create a chilling effect, turning journalism into a high-risk activity and forcing media to act more like PR agents than watchdogs," Sanjay Kapoor, senior journalist and current EGI president, told DW.

"It could bankrupt small media outlets or force self-censorship to avoid damaging costs." *— DW News*

SALAR ساہر

Post DC shooting, refugee groups fear backlash

People who work with refugees are worried that those who fled dangerous situations to start again in America will face backlash after authorities say an Afghan national shot two National Guard soldiers this week, killing one of them.

Many Afghans living in the US are afraid to leave their houses, fearing they'll be swept up by immigration officials or attacked with hate speech, said Shawn VanDiver, president of the San Diego-based group #AfghanEvac, a group that helps resettle Afghans who assisted the US during the two-decade war.

"They're terrified. It's insane," VanDiver told The Associated Press Thursday. "People are acting xenophobic because of one deranged man. He doesn't represent all Afghans. He represents himself."

Officials say Rahmanullah Lakanwal, 29, drove from his home in Bellingham, Washington, to the nation's capital where he shot two West Virginia National Guard members deployed in Washington, DC

President Donald Trump announced on Thursday that Specialist Sarah Beckstrom, 20, had died from her injuries. Staff Sergent. Andrew Wolfe, 24, remained hospitalized in critical condition.

Lakanwal had worked in a special CIA-backed Afghan Army unit before emigrating from Afghanistan, according to #AfghanEvac and two sources who spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the situation.

He applied for asylum during the Biden administration and his asylum was approved this year after undergoing a thorough vetting, the group said.

Afghan national Rahmanullah Lakanwal allegedly shot at two National Guards outside the White House

PHOTO: PTI

- Many Afghans living in the US are afraid to leave their houses, fearing they'll be swept up by immigration officials or attacked with hate speech, said Shawn VanDiver, president of the San Diego-based group #AfghanEvac, a group that helps resettle Afghans who assisted the US during the two-decade war.

After the shooting, US President Donald Trump said his administration would review everyone who entered the country under former president Joe Biden — a measure his administration had been planning even before the shooting.

Refugee groups fear they'll now be considered guilty by association. Ambassador Ashraf Haidari, founder and President of Displaced International, which provides resources, advocacy and support to displaced people worldwide, said there must be a thorough investigation and justice for those who were harmed, "but even as we pursue accountability, one individual's alleged actions cannot be allowed to define, burden, or endanger entire communities who had no part in this tragedy."

Matthew Soerens, a vice president with World Relief, a Christian humanitarian organization that helps settle refugees, including Afghan nationals in Whatcom County, Washington, said the person responsible for the shooting should face justice under the law.

"Regardless of the alleged perpetrator's nationality, religion or specific legal status, though," he said, "we urge our country to recognise these evil actions as those of one person, not to unfairly judge others who happen to share those same characteristics." *—PTI*

Many Afghans living in the US are afraid to leave their houses

PHOTO: PTI

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Global garment industry profiting from repression of workers

Governments, factories and global fashion brands are profiting from the continued repression of garment workers and abuse of their labour rights in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, Amnesty International said in two companion reports released today.

The two reports — 'Stitched Up: Denial of Freedom of Association for Garment Workers in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka' and 'Abandoned by Fashion: The urgent need for fashion brands to champion worker rights' — document widespread anti-union abuse in the garment industry, manifesting in abuses of workers' rights, harassment and violence by employers.

"An unholy alliance of fashion brands, factory owners and the governments of Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka is propping up an industry known for its endemic human rights abuses. By failing to ensure that the right of garment workers to unionise and collectively bargain is respected, the industry has thrived for decades on the exploitation of a grossly underpaid, overworked and mostly female workforce," said Agnès Callamard, Secretary General of Amnesty International.

The two reports are based on research carried out by Amnesty International between September 2023 and August 2024, including 88 interviews covering 20 factories in the four countries. This included 64 workers, 12 with union leaders and labour rights activists with over two-thirds of those interviewed being female. Amnesty International also sent a survey in November 2023 to 21 major brands and retailers in nine countries, including Germany, Denmark, Japan, Spain, Sweden, UK, USA, Spain and China, requesting information about their human rights policies, monitoring and concrete actions related to freedom of association, gender equality and purchasing practices.

Adidas, ASOS, Fast Retailing, Inditex, Otto Group and Primark provided full responses. Many others replied with partial information, including M&S and Walmart, while some failed to provide information, including Boohoo, H&M, Desigual, Next and Gap.

'IF WE JOIN THE UNION, WE WILL BE SACKED'

The global garment industry has long faced scrutiny over human rights abuses in its supply chains and business model. South Asian workers, especially women, are systematically disenfranchised through informal and insecure contracts, poverty wages, discrimination and precarious work conditions.

Two reports document widespread anti-union abuse in the garment industry, manifesting in abuses of workers' rights, harassment and violence by employers

PHOTO: PTI

In all four countries, garment workers said the threat of repercussions from employers prevented them from joining a union. All union organisers interviewed by Amnesty International described a climate of fear in which supervisors and factory bosses frequently harassed, dismissed and threatened workers for belonging to or organising a union, in a clear abuse of their right to freedom of association.

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS EVERY DAY

Authorities in all four countries use numerous ways to deter workers from organising themselves or deny them their labour rights through union busting, obstacles to the right to strike, such as the specific barriers to union organising in Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and replacing independent unions with pro-management bodies.

In India, vast numbers of home workers in the garment industry, working outside the factory on embroidery or finishing garments, are not recognised as employees under the country's labour laws and thus, are not eligible for pensions, other employment-related social protection benefits or union membership.

GLOBAL FASHION BRANDS RESPONSIBLE

Fashion companies contribute to workers' vulnerability as they are not fulfilling their human rights responsibilities, instead turning human rights due diligence and codes of conduct into tick box exercises. They have allowed the growth of opaque supply chains and demonstrated a willingness to source labour from governments and business partners that fail to oversee and remedy poor labour practices, or which actively repress freedom of association. The lack of due diligence legislation in many countries means brands are not held to account for their supply chains, enabling an extractive and exploitative industry. Where such laws exist, their implementation and scope are still emerging.

International law and standards, including the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, require fashion companies to identify and address all human rights risks and impacts by conducting ongoing human rights due diligence throughout their supply chain. However, in most garment-producing states, the lack of binding legislation has allowed the abuse of workers' rights to become embedded in supply chains, with little meaningful action taken to address it.

'ACCESS TO JUSTICE IS MINIMAL FOR WOMEN'

The majority of the garment industry workforce in South Asia are women, who are often rural migrants or from marginalised castes. Despite their numbers, they are under-represented in factory management, which typically reflects the patriarchal system outside the factory, as well as existing class, ethnic, religious and caste discrimination.

Female garment workers report being routinely harassed, attacked, and abused physically or sexually in the workplace. Yet they rarely get justice. The lack of effective, independent mechanisms to hear their grievances in male-led factories, combined with state-sponsored restrictions on organising and employers' threats against workers unionising, means their suffering continues.

"I was touched physically and abused verbally. No one in management would listen to my complaints, then I asked other women to organise. I was threatened with dismissal many times," Sumaayaa, a union organiser from Lahore, Pakistan, told Amnesty International. Amnesty International is calling on states to ensure that all workers can exercise their right to freedom of association, including by being able to form and join trade unions at the factory level and engage in collective bargaining

—Amnesty International

PHOTO: X

Virginia's sons seek control of her estate

MELBOURNE, 28 NOV

In an Australian court, the two sons of Virginia Giuffre, best known for her allegations against Jeffrey Epstein and Prince Andrew, are petitioning for control of her estate following her death by suicide in April at the age of 41. Giuffre's sons, Christian, 19, and Noah, 18, filed their case in June, aiming to manage her estate which includes property in Western Australia and potential earnings from her memoir, 'Nobody's Girl'. The brothers' request is contested by Giuffre's former housekeeper Cheryl Myers and her former attorney Karrie Louden, who also seek administrative control. A temporary administrator has been appointed, with further proceedings scheduled for next year. Discussions on adding Virginia's estranged husband and daughter to the case are ongoing. *—PTI*

22 TTP ultras killed in Pak's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

PESHAWAR, 28 NOV

At least 22 TTP terrorists were killed by security forces during an intelligence-driven operation in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, the military said. The operation was conducted on Wednesday in the Dera Ismail Khan district of the north-western province after receiving reports of the presence of terrorists of the 'Fitna Al-Khawarij.' The term Fitna al-Khawarij is used by Pakistani authorities to refer to militants of the outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Security forces attacked the terrorists' hideout, and after an intense exchange of fire, 22 were eliminated, the military said. A combing operation is being conducted to eliminate other terrorists present in the area, it added. *—PTI*

Belarus leader makes goodwill visit to Myanmar

BANGKOK, 28 NOV

Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko arrived in Myanmar on a goodwill visit, becoming only the second foreign leader to visit the country since the 2021 military takeover. The trip comes weeks before Myanmar's election that critics dismiss as neither free nor fair. They view Lukashenko's presence as lending legitimacy to the polls. Belarus, along with China and Russia, have been a key supporter and arms supplier to Myanmar's junta, providing radar technology and missile systems. Lukashenko is expected to meet military leader Min Aung Hlaing. Myanmar's military government has been sanctioned by Western nations over rights abuses. *—PTI*

Afghanistan says sorry after 3 killed in Tajikistan

KABUL, 28 NOV

Afghanistan expressed "deep regret" and strongly condemned a cross-border attack into neighbouring Tajikistan that killed three Chinese workers and wounded a fourth. An initial assessment on Friday indicated that "this incident involves elements that are trying to create chaos, instability, and distrust between countries in the region," said Foreign Ministry deputy spokesman Hafiz Zia Ahmad Takal. On Thursday, Tajikistan's Foreign Ministry said the attack was carried out the previous night from inside Afghanistan using a drone carrying grenades and firearms. The Chinese Embassy in Tajikistan urged its citizens to "refrain from investing or working on the Tajik-Afghanistan border," and advised those there to "evacuate as soon as possible." Pakistan also condemned the killings. *—PTI*

Reverse migration needed in the US: Trump

Trump says the Afghani shooter was a nutcase, orders crackdown on Green Card holders

WASHINGTON, 28 NOV

US President Donald Trump said that only "reverse migration" can cure America after two National Guard members were shot at near the White House.

"Only REVERSE MIGRATION can fully cure this situation," Trump wrote on Truth Social. "Other than that, HAPPY THANKSGIVING TO ALL, except those that hate, steal, murder, and destroy everything that America stands for — You won't be here for long!"

Trump said the official United States foreign population stands at "53 million people, most of which are on welfare, from failed nations, or from prisons, mental institutions, gangs, or drug cartels".

The shooter, Afghan national Rahmanullah Lakanwal, 29, had arrived in the US through a Biden-era immigration programme called 'Operation Allies Welcome' for Afghan nationals fleeing their country after the August 2021 Taliban takeover.

Emergency personnel gather in a cordoned off area where National Guard soldiers were shot near the White House in Washington *PHOTO: PTI*

To a question that Lakanwal had worked with the CIA in Afghanistan and had been vetted, Trump said the person "went cuckoo. I mean, he went nuts. And that happens too often with these people".

Meanwhile, US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Director Joseph Edlow said that Trump has "directed a full scale, rigorous re-examination of every Green Card for every alien from every country of concern".

The policy guidance is effective immediately and applies to requests pending or filed on or after 27 November.

In another post, Trump said, "This refugee burden is the leading cause of social dysfunction in America, something that did not exist after World War II (Failed schools, high crime, urban decay, overcrowded hospitals, housing shortages, and large deficits, etc.)."

He also said that hundreds of thousands of refugees from Somalia are "completely taking over" the state of Minnesota.

Trump also posted a photo of hundreds of Afghan nationals huddled in an American military plane and brought to the US under the Biden administration in the wake of Taliban takeover in 2021. "This is part of the horrendous airlift from Afghanistan." *—PTI*

Countries facing a travel ban

Here's the list of "countries of concerns" which will face a full or partial travel ban to the US: Afghanistan, Burma, Chad, the Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen, Burundi, Cuba, Laos, Sierra Leone, Togo, Turkmenistan and Venezuela.

Sarah Beckstrom *PHOTO: X*

One N'tl Guard member shot at dies

WEST PALM BEACH, 28 NOV

US President Donald Trump said that one of the two West Virginia National Guard members shot had died.

As part of his Thanksgiving call to US troops, Trump said that that Specialist Sarah Beckstrom, 20, had died, while Staff Sgt Andrew Wolfe, 24, was "fighting for his life."

"She's just passed away," Trump said. "She's no longer with us. She's looking down at us right now. Her parents are with her."

The President called Beckstrom an "incredible person, outstanding in every single way."

The Veterans of Foreign Wars post in Webster Springs, where Beckstrom is from, will hold three prayer vigils Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings, according to the Webster County Veterans Auxiliary. *—PTI*

Donald Trump *PHOTO: X*

'Will take Venezuela by land, soon'

FLORIDA, 28 NOV

US President Donald Trump said that said that military operations to stop alleged Venezuelan drug traffickers "by land" would begin "very soon".

Speaking from the Mar-a-Lago during a Thanksgiving video call with US service members, he claimed that smuggling was "about 85 per cent stopped by sea" and warned the alleged traffickers to "stop sending poison to our country".

"And we'll be starting to stop them by land also. The land is easier, but that's going to start very soon," Trump said.

His remarks come amid a stepped-up US military campaign in international waters of the Caribbean and Pacific. Since September, American forces have carried out at least 21 strikes on alleged drug-smug-

Zelenskyy's aide raided amid graft row

KYIV/BUDAPEST, 28 NOV

In a concerning development for Ukraine's leadership, anti-corruption units have raided the home and office of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's Chief of Staff, Andrii Yermak. This incident comes as Ukraine faces ongoing challenges during Russia's invasion and works to secure support from US officials for its peace proposals. Yermak confirmed on Telegram that investigators had searched both his office and apartment, stating, "The investigators are facing no obstacles," while declaring his full cooperation with the proceedings. This investigation forms part of a larger inquiry into a USD 100 million corruption scandal in the energy sector involving senior officials.

Andrii Yermak *PHOTO: X*

Meanwhile, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán is visiting Moscow for energy discussions with Russian President Vladimir Putin, marking a rare engagement by a European leader amid Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine. Orbán aims to ensure Hungary's access to "cheap Russian oil and gas," resources that have been subject to US sanctions."

POPE'S 1ST FOREIGN TRIP

Pope Leo XIV waves at people as he arrives at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, in Istanbul, Turkey, on his first foreign trip on Friday. Prior to departure, he warned that conflicts across the globe were endangering humanity *PHOTO: PTI*

Cyclone Ditwah toll rises to 56 in Lanka; 145 die in Thailand

COLOMBO, 28 NOV

The death toll due to floods and landslides caused by cyclonic storm Ditwah has risen to 56 and 21 remain missing in Sri Lanka as it announced a public holiday on Friday other than for those involved in essential services. Meanwhile, the death toll from flooding in southern Thailand has reached at least 145 as receding waters started to reveal devastating damage across the region.

At least 46 deaths were recorded between Tuesday and Friday alone in Sri Lanka leading as adverse weather conditions continue to affect the island, the Disaster Management Centre (DMC) said. At least 43,991 people have been affected by the extreme weather conditions.

Ditwah is located near Sri Lanka's eastern district of Trincomalee, the meteorology department announced on Friday morning.

Heavy showers, thunderstorms and strong winds will continue island-wide, with very heavy rainfall above 200mm expected in several provinces, and up to 150mm in areas, including Trincomalee in the east, Badulla in central Galle and Matara in the southern province, the weather bureau said.

Winds of 60-70kmph, gusting up to 80-90kmph, are likely across much of the country.

India said it would deploy its indigenous aircraft carrier INS Vikrant to help Sri Lanka.

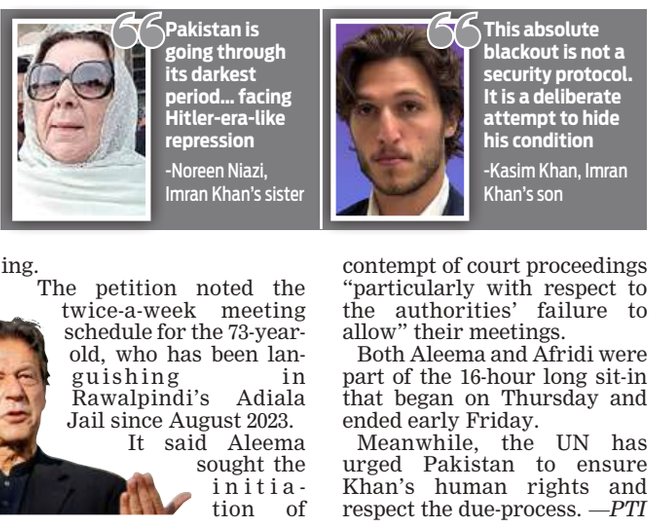
Meanwhile, rescuers were hampered by damaged bridges and roads after flash floods and landslides on Indonesia's Sumatra island left 79 people dead and dozens missing. *—PTI*

Imran's sister moves Islamabad HC after being barred from visits

ISLAMABAD, 28 NOV

Imran Khan's sister on Friday filed a contempt of court petition in the Islamabad High Court against the Adiala Jail Superintendent and others for not being allowed to meet Pakistan's jailed former prime minister.

Aleema Khan filed the petition in the presence of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi and other leaders of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). This comes amid rumours that Khan died in jail, something that the authorities denied. The PTI and Imran's family have asked the government to show proof of his well-being.



> Pakistan is going through its darkest period... facing Hitler-era-like repression
>
> -Noreen Niazi, Imran Khan's sister

> This absolute blackout is not a security protocol. It is a deliberate attempt to hide his condition
>
> -Kasim Khan, Imran Khan's son

The petition noted the twice-a-week meeting schedule for the 73-year-old, who has been languishing in Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail since August 2023.

It said Aleema sought the initiation of contempt of court proceedings "particularly with respect to the authorities' failure to allow" their meetings.

Both Aleema and Afridi were part of the 16-hour long sit-in that began on Thursday and ended early Friday.

Meanwhile, the UN has urged Pakistan to ensure Khan's human rights and respect the due-process. *—PTI*

Europe slams Sudan war, but no mention of UAE

STRASBOURG/ CAIRO, 28 NOV

The European Parliament approved a resolution that calls for an end to the civil war in Sudan, but omitted any mention of the United Arab Emirates' (UAE) alleged role in the conflict.

Reports suggest that UAE delegations had lobbied in Strasbourg and convinced Members of the European Parliament (MEP) to remove any mention of the UAE's role in the conflict. Multiple expert groups and leaked United Nations (UN) reports suggest that the UAE has been funding the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

The European resolution condemns the civil and atrocities committed by both the RSF and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF).

Meanwhile, experts have raised concerns about the RSF trafficking of young girls and women from el-Fasher, which the RSF seized last month, the UN said. The UN said that renewed fighting in the Kordofan region is driving further large-scale displacement.

Meanwhile, the RSF have converted parts of the Al-Nuhud Hospital in West Kordofan in Sudan's south into a military command centre and barracks since taking over of the city five months ago, Sudan Doctors Network said. The UN has called Sudan the worst humanitarian crisis. *—Agencies*

Israeli soldiers stormed the Syrian village of Beit Jin and opened fire when confronted by residents on Friday *PHOTO: SANA*

Israeli raid kills 13 in southern Syria

DAMASCUS, 28 NOV

Israeli forces in southern Syria raided a village and opened fire when they were confronted by residents on Friday, killing at least 13, Syrian officials said.

The Syrian state news agency SANA said Israeli forces entered the village of Beit Jin, aiming to detain local men and opened heavy fire after protests by residents.

Israel said on Friday it conducted an operation to apprehend suspects from the Jamaa Islamiya, an Islamic Group, operating in Beit Jin. During the raid, militants fired at Israeli troops, injuring half a dozen soldiers, the military said.

Israeli troops fired at the militants and also responded with air attacks. It said the operation had concluded, all the suspects were apprehended, and many militants were killed. However, local official said that those killed were civilians. *—PTI*

200 RESIDENTS UNTRACED

Hong Kong toll now 128, search on for those missing

HONG KONG, 28 NOV

Hong Kong firefighters searched through a high-rise tower complex apartment-by-apartment Friday for more victims after a massive fire engulfed seven of its eight buildings, killing at least 128 people.

Crews were prioritising apartments from which they received more than two dozen calls for assistance during the blaze, but were unable to reach.

The toll rose on Friday afternoon to 128 after more bodies were found in the blackened towers.

The fire started on Wednesday afternoon in one of the Wang Fuk Court complex's eight towers, jumping rapidly from one to the next as bamboo scaffolding caught fire.

The charred high-rise after a deadly fire that started Wednesday at Wang Fuk Court, in Hong Kong *PHOTO: PTI*

The final search of the buildings is expected to be completed late Friday, at which point officials have said they will officially end the rescue.

Three men, the directors and an engineering consultant of a construction company, have been arrested, and police said company heads were suspected of gross negligence.

While the exact cause of the inferno that swept across the apartment complex is unknown, questions have been raised about the role of the bamboo scaffolding that enveloped the buildings at the time of the fire.

The blaze has focused attention on the use of the ancient construction technique used for more than 1,000 years.

Hong Kong's anti-corruption agency said it arrested eight people connected to the renovation of the buildings, including scaffolding subcontractors and directors of an engineering consultant company. *—PTI*

Gold climbs by Rs 700 to Rs 1.30 lakh/10g

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

Gold prices climbed Rs 700 to Rs 1,30,160 per 10g in the national capital on Friday tracking firm trends in the global markets and strong investor appetite, according to marketmen. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity jumped by Rs 700 to Rs 1,29,560 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes). Silver prices also continued their upward march for the fourth straight session, soaring by Rs 3,000 to Rs 1,71,200 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes). In the past four sessions, the white metal skyrocketed by Rs 16,200 from Rs 1,55,000 per kg on Monday. In the international markets, spot gold went up by USD 12.44 , or 0.30 per cent, to USD 4,169.88 per ounce. Spot silver was trading 0.77 per cent higher at USD 53.81 per ounce, marking gains for the fifth straight day. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Rupee falls by 7P, settles at 89.43 against USD

MUMBAI, 28 NOV

The rupee dropped 7 paise to settle at 89.43 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, tracking a strong greenback and a rise in crude oil prices in the international market.The Indian currency was also weighed down by subdued equity market sentiment and the withdrawal of foreign funds, even as investors keenly awaited the release of domestic macroeconomic data later in the day, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 89.41 and touched the intraday low of 89.49 against the greenback. It finally settled at 89.43 (provisional) against the US dollar, registering a loss of 7 paise from the previous close. Meanwhile, the dollar index was 0.18 per cent higher at 99.69. *—PTI*

Apple to open 5th store in Noida on 11 December

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

Apple has announced the opening of its fifth store in India, situated in Noida at the DLF Mall of India, set to launch on 11 December. In a statement, the company expressed that "this opening marks another milestone in Apple's ongoing retail expansion in the country, bringing customers in Noida new ways to explore and buy Apple products." The store's barricade features vibrant peacock-inspired designs, reflecting India's national bird. Customers will be able to explore the iPhone 17 lineup, receive expert support, and attend "Today at Apple" sessions—all geared towards enhancing learning and creativity, showcasing Apple's commitment to personalised customer engagement in India. *—PTI*

FM, Naidu launch financial hub in Amaravati

AMARAVATI, NOV 28

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Friday laid the foundation stone for new offices of 15 public sector banks and insurance companies in Amaravati. The institutions, including SBI, LIC and NABARD, will invest Rs 1,328 crore and are expected to create 6,541 jobs. She said Amaravati was planned through scientific consultation and now required financial backing, describing the establishment of all major PSU banks and insurers on one financial street as a historic first for any state capital. She thanked institutional heads for their participation and praised Naidu's efforts to revive the stalled capital project, calling it a "Brahma Yagna". She expressed confidence Amaravati will become a strong and prosperous capital. *—PTI*

IMF grades India's GDP, other national data 'C'

Meanwhile, Moody's says India will lead growth in markets

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has graded India's GDP and other national accounts statistics as 'C', the second-lowest rating, said the source.

According to the sources, the IMF's annual review of India's economic framework states that the data has been graded as 'C' due to some shortcoming which might hamper the surveillance.

The financial institution stated in its review that the available data are "adequate frequency and timeliness and provide broadly adequate granularity, methodological weaknesses somewhat hamper surveillance and warrant an overall sectoral rating for the national accounts of C".

It also pointed out the lack of seasonally-adjusted data and need for improvement of other statistical methods, which are using in quarterly national accounts compilation, said sources.

IMF pointed out the lack of seasonally-adjusted data PHOTO: IMF

MOODY'S STATE 7 PER CENT GDP EXPANSION

Moody's Ratings on Friday said with a 7 per cent GDP expansion in 2025 and 6.4 per cent in the next year, India will lead growth among emerging markets and across the Asia Pacific region.

Moody's also said that India's domestic growth drivers underpin its economic resilience amid global uncertainty.

Although the Indian rupee has continued to weaken against the dollar, most rated companies have active currency risk management or strong financial buffers, while investment-grade entities have demonstrated access to international capital markets.

Its projected average GDP growth in APAC (Asia-Pacific) will remain steady at 3.4 per cent in 2026 compared with 3.3 per cent in 2024 and expected growth of 3.6 per cent in 2025. *—Agencies*

Sensex slipped by 13.71 points or 0.02 per cent, while Nifty skidded 12.60 points or 0.05 per cent PHOTO: PTI

Mkts end flat ahead of GDP & IIP data announcement

MUMBAI, 28 NOV

Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty closed almost unchanged in a highly volatile trade on Friday as investors stayed on the sidelines ahead of key macroeconomic data announcements in post-market hours.

Halting its two-day rally, the 30-share BSE Sensex slipped by 13.71 points or 0.02 per cent to settle at 85,706.67. During the day, it hit a high of 85,969.89 and a low of 85,577.82, gyrating 392.07 points.

The 50-share NSE Nifty skidded 12.60 points or 0.05 per cent to 26,202.95.

The key indices had raced to record highs in intra-day trade on Thursday but ended almost flat due to profit-taking by investors in the second half of the session.

Analysts said that fresh foreign fund outflows and largely muted global market trends kept the stock markets rangebound.

Among Sensex firms, Power Grid, Eternal, Bharti Airtel, Axis Bank and Infosys were the biggest laggards.

However, Mahindra & Mahindra, Sun Pharma, Kotak Mahindra Bank and State Bank of India were among the major gainers.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index settled lower while Japan's Nikkei 225 index and Shanghai's SSE Composite index ended in positive territory.

Markets in Europe were trading mostly lower. US markets were closed on Thursday due to the Thanksgiving holiday. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 1,255.20 crore on Thursday, while Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) bought stocks worth Rs 3,940.87 crore, according to exchange data.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, went up by 0.25 per cent to USD 63.50 per barrel. *—PTI*

AUS SC blocks activist seeking Adani's coal mine data

BRISBANE, 28 NOV

The Supreme Court of Queensland has issued permanent orders prohibiting anti-fossil-fuel activist Ben Penning's from seeking or using confidential information belonging to Adani's Carmichael coal mine, concluding a lengthy legal battle.

The orders require Penning's to cease efforts to obtain confidential business information from Bravus Mining and Resources employees, contractors or potential contractors, and bar him from encouraging others to disclose such material. Bravus, a subsidiary of the Adani Group, has agreed not to pursue its legal costs.

The Carmichael coal mine in the Galilee Basin produces about 10 million tonnes of coal annually for export.

The Carmichael coal mine in the Galilee Basin produces about 10 million tonnes of coal annually for export PHOTO: BRAVUS MINING

While the orders restrict the solicitation of confidential information, they do not limit Penning's' ability to take part in lawful protest or public advocacy.

Bravus had initially filed a civil claim alleging that Penning's attempted to undermine the company's operations through targeted pressure on contractors and suppliers.

Bravus' Chief Operating Officer, Mick Crowe, welcomed the ruling, stating it was intended to stop actions the company regarded as harassment and intimidation. Court evidence indicated that Pennings' activities—including blockades, office incursions and campaigns aimed at suppliers—led several major companies to cut ties with Bravus, while others were forced to invest in additional security. *—PTI*

Meesho's ₹5,421 crore IPO to open on 3 Dec

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

SoftBank-backed e-commerce firm Meesho has announced plans to raise Rs 5,421 crore through its initial public offering (IPO), set to open for subscription on 3 December. The company has established a price band of Rs 105 to Rs 111 per share, targeting a valuation of Rs 50,096 crore (approximately USD 5.6 billion) at the upper end.

Meesho's IPO will close on 5 December, with allocations for anchor investors scheduled for 2 December. The offering includes a fresh issue of shares worth Rs 4,250 crore, complemented by an offer for sale (OFS) of 10.55 crore shares, valued at Rs 1,171 crore at the upper price band, bringing the total issue size to Rs 5,421 crore.

Notable early investors, including Elevation, Peak XV, Venture Highway, and Y Combinator, are participating in the OFS.

Proceeds from the IPO will be used for investments in cloud infrastructure, marketing initiatives, and potential acquisitions.

Seventy-five per cent of the issue is earmarked for qualified institutional buyers, 15 per cent for non-institutional investors, and the remaining 10 per cent for retail investors.

In FY25, Meesho registered a net merchandise value growth of 29 per cent year-on-year, reaching Rs 29,988 crore, though it reported a net loss of Rs 3,942 crore, due to one-time expenses. *—PTI*

NCLT clears ₹1.9K cr NSEL settlement

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has approved a One-Time Settlement Scheme between the National Spot Exchange Limited (NSEL) and traders, paving the way for a Rs 1,950 crore payout to 5,682 affected traders, the exchange announced on Friday.

The settlement provides proportionate payments based on outstanding dues as of 31 July, 2024. In return, traders must close all legal cases against the group and assign their rights to 63 moons, NSEL said in a statement.

The proposal was filed before NCLT Mumbai by NSEL with support from its parent company, 63 moons technologies limited, aiming for an amicable, full and final resolution.

When put to vote, 92.81 per cent of traders by number and 91.35 per cent by value backed the plan.

This is the second time 63 moons has intervened to assist traders. In August 2013, it helped distribute around Rs 179 crore to 7,053 small traders.

The decision brings long-awaited relief to traders impacted by the NSEL payment crisis of July 2013. *—PTI*

DBS ex-CEO named as Temasek's Chairman

MUMBAI, 28 NOV

Piyush Gupta, the former chief executive of DBS Bank, has been appointed chairman of Temasek India, the local arm of Singapore's investment company. Gupta, an alumnus of IIM Ahmedabad, led DBS Bank for 16 years until earlier this year.

Effective 1 December, Gupta will assume a non-executive and advisory role, collaborating with the local team.

Temasek recently revealed that its India portfolio has surpassed USD 50 billion and is actively pursuing up to USD 4 billion in new investments.

Gupta will partner with India head Ravi Lambah on investment strategies, support Temasek's portfolio companies, and engage with the Indian government and business sectors. Temasek Holdings' executive director and CEO, Dilhan Pillay, remarked, "Piyush brings extensive business insights and strong connections developed over decades in financial services. *—PTI*

Piyush Gupta PHOTO: ANI

Rs 41 crore GST penalty imposed on Torrent Pharmaceuticals

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

Torrent Pharmaceuticals Ltd on Friday said the central GST authority has imposed a penalty of over Rs 41 crore on the company for alleged erroneous refund on export of goods.

The Joint Commissioner, Common Adjudicating Authority, Central GST, Ahmedabad South Commissionerate, passed an order imposing a penalty of Rs 41,33,84,165, Torrent Pharmaceuticals Ltd said in a regulatory filing.The order dated 26 November, 2025 alleges an erroneous refund by the department on export of goods, it added.

The company further said based on its assessment, an appeal will be filed and is hopeful of a favourable outcome and does not reasonably expect the order to have any material financial impact on it. *— PTI*

Govt notifies 18 pvt entities to boost coal sector

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

The government on Friday said it has expanded the list of agencies authorised to carry out search and exploration of coal and lignite by adding 18 new entities, taking their total number to 45.

Exploration and preparation of a geological report by an authorised prospecting agency is a prerequisite for operationalisation of a coal mine. Until now, a total of 27 entities have been authorised to operate as prospecting agencies.

- Exploration and preparation of a geological report by an authorised prospecting agency is a prerequisite for operationalisation of a coal mine.

The addition of new exploration agencies will result in saving of around six months for a mining operator who, until now, has to wait for a report from a prospecting agency about mineral deposits in a particular area.

The coal ministry said in a statement that 18 agencies have been added "for carrying out prospecting operations for the exploration of coal and lignite, enabling the coal blocks allottees to have more flexibility and choice towards engaging these agencies". *—PTI*

Aggressive hybrid MF assets rise

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

Aggressive hybrid mutual funds have gained significant traction among investors, with their asset base soaring to Rs 2.5 lakh crore by October 2025, marking a 13 per cent increase from the previous year. This growth comes amidst a period of volatility in the benchmark Nifty, prompting investors to pursue stability through mixed portfolios.

The investor base expanded dramatically, adding 400,000 folios over the year to reach 6.04 million by October 2025, according to the Association of Mutual Funds in India. Aggressive hybrid funds typically allocate 65-80 per cent of their assets to equities, averaging about 72 per cent. ICICI Prudential Equity & Debt Fund has led returns. *— PTI*

RS 350 CROORE DEAL

MiniMines, K'taka sign MoU for refining facility

BENGALURU, 28 NOV

City-based startup MiniMines Cleantech Solutions on Friday signed an MoU with the Karnataka government to set up a Rs 350 crore Giga Critical Minerals Refining Complex in the city, officials said.

The Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the Department of Electronics, Information Technology and Biotechnology in Bengaluru, they said.

According to a statement, the proposed facility will support sectors including electric vehicles, renewable energy, aerospace, defence and electronics by ensuring a steady supply of refined materials worth Rs 500-600 crore that are currently imported.

"The first phase will have a refining capacity of 15,000 MTPA, generating 13,400 tonnes of annual throughput. For every Rs 1 crore of MiniMines' output, approximately Rs 3 crore of industrial value will be created downstream through various supply chains," the statement said.

The refining complex will use MiniMines' patented Hybrid-Hydrometallurgy (HHM)™ technology for recycling lithium-ion batteries.

The company is also developing its HydroMag REE Loop™ process for recycling and recovering rare earth magnets.

MiniMines Co-Founder and CEO Anupam Kumar said the agreement marks a significant milestone in India's push for self-reliance in critical minerals.

The company said the project is expected to create more than 1,500 direct and indirect jobs and contribute around Rs 1,300 crore in annual turnover and Rs 200 crore in GST revenue once operational.

Commenting on the partnership, Karnataka Minister for Panchayati Raj and Rural Development and IT/BT, Priyank Kharge, said MiniMines' work in critical minerals and rare earth recycling is a significant step toward India's self-reliance and a greener future. *—PTI*

The MoU was signed with the Department of Electronics, Information Technology and Biotechnology in Bengaluru on Friday

India to host SL for five women's T20Is from 21 to 30 Dec

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

The Indian women's team will take on Sri Lanka in a five-match T20I series in Visakhapatnam and Trivandrum from 21 to 30 December, the BCCI said on Friday, days after a scheduled rubber against Bangladesh was postponed due to political tensions between the two countries.

This will be the first assignment for the 'Women in Blue' after their ODI World Cup-winning campaign earlier this year.

"The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) announces the schedule for the upcoming Women's T20I series as India hosts Sri Lanka for a five-match contest next month. The series will begin in Visakhapatnam before moving to Thiruvananthapuram for the remaining fixtures," the BCCI said in a statement.

As per the original schedule, the Indian women's team was supposed to play a home series against Bangladesh during the same time.

The Sri Lankans will be playing a T20I bilateral series in India for the first time since 2016, which the hosts won 3-0.

India last played a T20I series in July this year, when they registered a historic win in England. India won that series, their first in England, 3-2. —*PTI*

SCHEDULE 2025

- 1st T20I: 21 December, Visakhapatnam
- 2nd T20I: 23 December, Visakhapatnam
- 3rd T20I: 26 December, Thiruvananthapuram
- 4th T20I: 28 December, Thiruvananthapuram
- 5th T20I: 30 December, Thiruvananthapuram

Jharkhand elbow out K'taka, Mhatre slams 110 for Mumbai

Roy marshalled Jharkhand's chase of 158 with a composed unbeaten 95

AHMEDABAD, 28 NOV

Middle-order batter Anukul Roy marshalled Jharkhand's chase of 158 with a composed unbeaten 95 (58b, 9x4, 5x6) as they edged out Karnataka by two wickets in a last-over finish.

Chasing Karnataka's 157 for nine, Roy singlehandedly guided Jharkhand's chase as only skipper Ishan Kishan (15) and Virat Singh (12) managed to find double-digit scores.

Needing six runs to win from the final over with two wickets remaining, Roy took his side past in 19.4 overs.

Earlier, Roy had also taken two wickets in Karnataka's innings to cap an excellent all-round outing.

Karnataka: 157/9 in 20 overs (Mayank Agarwal 37, R Smaran 32; Anukul Roy 2/13, Sushant Mishra /39) lost to Jharkhand: 158/8 in 19.4 overs (Anukul Roy 95 not out; Vidyadhar Patil 3/45).

Jharkhand: 4 points; Karnataka: 0.

Anukul Roy *PHOTO: PTI*

Ayush Mhatre *PHOTO: PTI*

Chennai Super Kings batter Ayush Mhatre on Friday scored a century for Mumbai against Vidarbha during the group-stage match in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy 2025.

The 18-year-old completed the century in just 49 balls, hitting eight fours and seven sixes on the way.

He ended unbeaten on 110 off 53 balls to steer Mumbai to a seven-wicket victory while chasing 193.

Earlier on Friday, Mhatre was also named India Under-19 captain for the U-19 Asia Cup in Dubai from 12 to 21 December.

Dhull shines as Delhi beat Tamil Nadu

Yash Dhull made an explosive fifty, leading Delhi to a thrilling, last-ball six-wicket victory over Tamil Nadu in a Group D match of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy here on Friday.

Once Tamil Nadu scored a competitive 198 for seven in 20 overs, Delhi needed a strong, collective batting effort to overhaul the target.

Dhull (71, 46b, 4x4, 4x6) glued together Delhi's chase with his aggressive fifty, as they ended up with 203 for four in 20 overs.

During his stay, the 23-year-old engaged in three partnerships of considerable significance — a 52 for the opening wicket with Priyansh Arya (35, 15b), a 58 for the second wicket with skipper Nitish Rana (34, 26b), and then the most crucial 61-run alliance with Ayush Badoni (41, 23b) for the third wicket.

But Dhull fell to TN left-arm seamer T Natarajan, and Badoni departed, giving a catch to Shahrukh Khan off pacer Sonu Yadav. —*PTI*

SECOND ASHES TEST

Cummins ruled out, Australia name unchanged squad

SYDNEY, 28 NOV

Australia skipper Pat Cummins was on Friday ruled out of the second Ashes Test as the hosts named an unchanged 14-member squad for the day and night game in Brisbane.

In Cummins' absence, stand-in skipper Steve Smith led Australia to an eight-wicket victory in the first Test as the hosts took a 1-0 lead in the five-match series. The second Test is slated for December 4.

Cummins, however, will travel to Brisbane to continue his return as he's likely to be back for the third Test in Adelaide from December 17. The Australian pace spearhead was seen in a rigorous training session at the SCG on Friday, bowling to Smith.

With Cummins ruled out, Brendan Doggett, who bagged five wickets in Perth, is likely to share pace duties with Mitchell Starc and Scott Boland. Left-handed opener Usman Khawaja, who suffered back spasms in the opening Test, retains his place in the squad, but he will need to prove his fitness before the second Test. All-rounder Beau Webster and back-up batter Josh Inglis are the other options if Khawaja misses out.

Australia squad for second Test: Steve Smith (c), Scott Boland, Alex Carey, Brendan Doggett, Cameron Green, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Khawaja, Labuschagne, Lyon, Michael Neser, Mitchell Starc, Jake Weatherald and Beau Webster. —*PTI*

Ayush Mhatre to lead India in U19 Asia Cup

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

Promising batter Ayush Mhatre was retained on Friday as captain of a 15-member Indian team for the upcoming U19 Asia Cup, in which the focus will again be on teen batting sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi.

The age-group continental tournament will be held in Dubai from December a 50-overs format.

Mhatre had also led India during a multi-format tour of Australia in September and October.Vihaan Malhotra has been appointed as the vice-captain for the tournament, which will serve as a preparatory ground for the U19 World Cup, to be played in Zimbabwe and Namibia in January-February next year. —*PTI*

GAMBHIR FACES SCRUTINY FROM BCCI AFTER CANDID REMARKS

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

Gambhir's remarks unsettled the BCCI, especially as India's batting struggled on both the Kolkata and Guwahati pitches, questioning the team's adaptability and preparation strategy.

The BCCI has expressed dissatisfaction with India head coach Gautam Gambhir's candid comments about the Kolkata pitch following the team's recent Test defeat to South Africa. While no immediate action is being taken,

sources indicate that Gambhir is likely to remain in his role for now due to a lack of alternatives. However, his position may be reconsidered later in the year, particularly if India struggles in the T20 World Cup on home soil.

The board's frustration stems from Gambhir's public support of the black-soil pitch at Eden Gardens, which drew criticism after India's collapse on a turning track that exposed significant technical flaws.

India lost by 30 runs, bowled out for just 93 in the fourth innings. This defeat added to the series of disappointing home Test performances, with India losing three consecutive home series. Gambhir, however, defended the pitch, stating that it performed exactly as the team had asked for. "This is the exact pitch we asked for. The curator was extremely helpful and supportive. We got exactly what we wanted. When you don't perform well, this is what happens," he said following the defeat in Kolkata.

The BCCI has expressed dissatisfaction with India head coach Gautam Gambhir's candid comments about the Kolkata pitch following the team's recent Test defeat to South Africa. —*PTI*

Kalimuendo strikes in Nottingham Forest's win

LONDON, 28 NOV

Skipper Ryan Yates, Arnaud Kalimuendo and Nikola Milenkovic scored to ensure a comfortable win, in a repeat of the 1979 European Cup final when Forest beat the 24-time Swedish champions.

Forest won 3-0 on Thursday night, with Abbott handed a start by manager Sean Dyche. Our aggressiveness in the press made sure they couldn't get out that much. They had a few spells, but not too much. We kept it two-touch... and, luckily, the goals fell for us."That's when you start being comfortable in the game and move the ball quicker. I can take positives away (personally), and it was a good performance, with loads to go at and more to learn."

Forest recorded three successive wins for the first time since the turn of the year - the drop-off in their form during the second half of last season is the reason why they are in the Europa League and not the Champions League.

But they are now two points off the top eight - automatic qualification for the last 16 - with three games left.

"The mentality we're trying to build here it's one game at a time. —*PTI*

Rajasthan Royals up for sale ahead of IPL 2026: Report

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

IPL champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru are reportedly up for sale ahead of the start of the 2026 edition of the IPL, and if Harsha Goenka, who is the elder brother of Lucknow Super Giants owner Sanjiv Goenka, is to be believed, then 2008 IPL champions Rajasthan Royals are also in search of new owners. Harsh took to X on Thursday evening to post a tweet in which he wrote.

I hear, not one, but two IPL teams are now up for sale- RCB and RR. It seems clear that people want to cash in on the rich valuations today. So two teams for sale and 4/5 possible buyers! Who will be the successful buyers- will it be from Pune, Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Bengaluru or the USA?. —*PTI*

Germany beat South Africa 4-0 in FIH Junior WC opener

MADURAI, 28 NOV

Reigning champions Germany thrashed South Africa 4-0 in their opening match to begin their FIH Men's Hockey World Cup campaign on a rousing note here on Friday.

Justus Warweg struck a brace for seven-time winners Germany, scoring field goals in the 19th and 56th minutes, while Ben Hasbach (43rd minute) and Paul Glander (44th) converted two penalty corners.

In the first match of Pool A, Ireland beat Canada 4-3 in an engrossing contest.

Ireland took the lead in the 13th minute with a meticulous field effort from Louis Rowe, before Canada equalised in the 26th minute with a field goal from Gurnoor Bhullar.

Rowe scored another fine field goal in the 33rd minute.

Gregory Williams made it 3-1 to Ireland, converting a penalty corner in the 35th minute.

Germany and South African players exchange greetings after the former won the inaugural match of the Hockey Men's Junior World Cup *PHOTO: PTI*

Milo Thompson extended the lead when he scored another impressive field goal.

Trailing 1-4, Canada didn't bow down and dominated the later stages of the match, scoring two goals.

Leighton De Souza converted two penalty corners in the 48th and 53rd minutes to give his side some hope.

But Canada couldn't equalise as they failed to breach the Irish defence in the final seven minutes. —*PTI*

AMID VISA DISPUTE

Iran boycotts 2026 World Cup draw in US

TEHRAN, 28 NOV

Iran will not send representatives to next week's World Cup draw ceremony in the United States, the Iranian Football Federation announced on Thursday, citing visa problems.

Amir Mehdi Alavi, the federation's spokesperson, said the decision was made due to difficulties in obtaining visas for official federation members a process he said had moved beyond sports channels and prevented Iran's delegation from attending the international event. Alavi said in a televised interview that the federation has held official correspondence with FIFA's president and secretary-general in recent days, and that FIFA is following up on the matter. He warned that the situation could create future problems for players and support staff entering the US , potentially disrupting the national team's preparations. ISNA reported that the federation's board decided on Thursday that no Iranian officials would attend the World Cup draw ceremony.

US denies visa to top Iranian football officials for 2026 World Cup Draw *PHOTO: X/@PERSIANFOOTBALL.COM*

According to the federation, the decision came after five members of a nine-person delegation were denied US visas.

However, two sources within the Iranian Football Federation and the Sports Ministry told IranWire that the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) ordered the boycott on Tuesday and communicated the decision to federation president Mehdi Taj.

Regarding speculation about Iran withdrawing from the World Cup, Alavi said no such decision has been made and that the federation's goal is to ensure the national team's participation. —*PTI*

Portugal wins FIFA Under-17 WC title

DOHA, 28 NOV

Portugal won the FIFA Under-17 World Cup title Thursday night, beating Austria 1-0 in the final of a 48-nation tournament where European teams took the first three places.

Benfica forward Anísio Cabral narrowly stayed onside to receive a pass across the goalmouth and score into an empty net in the 32nd minute.

It was Cabral's seventh goal of the tournament, one fewer than Austria's Golden Ball winner Johannes Moser.

It was Portugal's first U17 title and came in the 20th edition of an event FIFA has expanded and now organizes annually instead of every two years.

Qatar staged this edition and will also host in each of the next four years.

Earlier in Doha, goalkeeper Alessandro Longoni saved two penalties as Italy beat Brazil 4-2 in a shootout after a 0-0 draw in the third-place game. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Poonacha-Isaro secures Australian Open 2026 spot

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

Indian tennis player Niki Poonacha, along with Thailand's Pruchya Isaro, secured a spot in the Australian Open 2026 men's doubles main draw after beating Japan's Shunsuke Nakagawa and Yusuke Kusuhara in the Asia-Pacific wildcard play-off tournament final on Friday. The Indo-Thai pair beat the Japanese duo 6-4, 6-3 at the Sichuan International Tennis Centre in Chengdu, China, to secure a spot in the Grand Slam Finals. In the semifinals, they beat South Korea's fourth seeds Park Ui-seong and Nam Ji-sung 6-4, 6-2. This will be the 30-year-old Poonacha's first appearance at a Grand Slam.—*PTI*

Tanvi, Unnati, and Srikanth reach semifinals of SMI

LUCKNOW, 28 NOV

Tanvi Sharma crushed Hong Kong's Lo Sin Yan Happy in straight games to storm into the semifinals, while Unnati Hooda and Kidambi Srikanth also made their way into the final four of the Syed Modi International Super 300, here on Friday. In the women's singles, the 16-year-old Tanvi, who had earlier defeated former world champion Nozomi Okuhara from Japan, needed only 38 minutes to brush aside the challenge of Lo Sin 21-13, 21-19. Tanvi will take on fifth-seeded Hina Akechi of Japan, who got the better of third-seeded Sung Shuo Yun 21-8, 21-15 in the other quarterfinal. Unnati was made to work hard by compatriot Rakshitha Santosh R in the quarterfinal, before winning 21-15, 13-21, 21-16. Unnati will face off against fourth seed Neslihan Arin in the semifinals.—*PTI*

Chameera lifts Sri Lanka into final of T20 tri-series

RAWALPINDI, 28 NOV

Fast bowler Dushmantha Chameera grabbed 4-20 and stifled Pakistan in the final over as Sri Lanka breezed into the final of the T20 tri-series with a six-run victory. Pakistan, which had already qualified for Saturday's final with three successive wins, was held to 178-7 with captain Salman Ali Agha's career-best unbeaten 63 going in vain. Opening batter Kamil Mishra's 76 off 48 balls had earlier anchored Sri Lanka to 184-5 in a game the team had to win to reach the final instead of Zimbabwe.—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

New boxing coach Nieva aims for more medals at LA 2028

MUMBAI, 28 NOV

Newly-appointed Indian women's boxing head coach Santiago Nieva believes the current squad is brimming with potential, as he sets sights on creating history by going "beyond a bronze medal" at the Los Angeles Olympics 2028.Nieva, who earlier served as India's high-performance director (HPD) from 2017 to 2022 and worked predominantly with the men's team, returns to the country in a new capacity to shape the future of the women's squad."The Indian women's team is really strong, and I think it's important to win those Olympic medals that weren't possible to secure in Paris," Nieva told PTI from Australia. "So, I thought that with the potential there is with the women's team and all those excellent boxers, I would like to contribute.—*PTI*